Reincarnation

And Other Incidents

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Reincarnation

And Other Lectures

By L. W. ROGERS

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Reincarnation

This physical life is but a fragment of a whole —an incident in the stupendous forward and upward movement of the human race—the camping ground of a day in the evolutionary march, shut off front and rear by the fogs of ignorance. We are the prisoners of the physical senses, temporarily held within their limitations, and we strive in vain to look beyond. We find ourselves in the midst of the baffling mysteries of life. Every birth is a miracle. We look with joy upon the mysterious babe and ask ourselves "whence?" Every death is a tragedy. We dumbly gaze upon the lifeless clay and, with aching hearts, ask ourselves "whither?"

And thus it has been since time began. We come, we live, we love, we part. And standing in agony by the silent tomb we implore heart and intellect anew to solve this problem of the whence and whither of the human race.

No solution will ever satisfy the human heart that does not rest upon facts and logic. No mere hope of life eternal will comfort the sorrowing. No confidence of assertion will ever banish doubt. The solution must satisfy the intellect,

must stand the test of reason, must rest upon the rock of logic. Does such a solution of life's problem exist? Has such an answer to the riddle of the origin and destiny of the human race ever been made?

As a matter of fact the explanation of life's purpose is as old as human understanding. The answer has been ringing through the universe since time began, for all who had ears to hear, and has been known and forgotten, recovered and lost, as civilizations have come and gone in evolution's rhythmic cycles of the past.

Life is necessarily expressed through physical matter until human evolution is finished. The result is ceaseless conflict between the spiritual and the material. Sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, is temporarily triumphant. Every soul among us oscillates like a pendulum between the higher aspirations and the lower desires. Every person knows there are periods in his life when he feels a great spiritual uplift and finds it easy to do the good he would, and that there are other times when his desires for worldly things grow strong and bind him closer to material life; times when all the teaching and the preaching of the higher life appeal to him with resistless force, and other times when they fall upon deaf and heedless ears.

Precisely so it is with the composite man we

call the human race. The evolution of the race is like the lifetime of one man. It is slowly lifting itself from the bonds of matter. It is swinging like a pendulum between the poles of the spiritual and the material. There are times when the race as a whole becomes keenly awake to the spiritual uplift that pulses through the universe. There are other times when it is so completely absorbed in material things and so blinded by matter that it forgets its divine origin and its measureless possibilities. These alternating periods of spirituality and materiality in the life of the race, of spiritual light and material doubt, have succeeded each other as civilizations have dawned and matured and vanished in the mighty play of the cosmic forces; and so it is that what is known in one age has been forgotten in another and recovered in still another; but never has the knowledge of the origin and destiny of the human race completely vanished from physical life. Never has a knowledge of the purpose of life and the method of its evolution disappeared from every portion of the visible world. Somewhere the soul light has steadily burned. Somewhere the flame has been guarded by the sacrificial life of the Elder Brothers of the race, ready to shine forth at the propitious time and once more flood the world with light.

We are all familiar with at least one of the

oscillating incidents in human evolution when our ancestors swung from light to darkness, from the culture of the best Grecian times to the ignorance, the cruelty, the barbarism of the period that modern historians have called the Dark Ages. Intellectual night fell upon the Western world. Art was lost and compassion forgotten. Selfishness and physical force were the dominant factors in human affairs. From that plunge into materiality the Western world is slowly recovering. Naturally enough it first got back the knowledge intimately connected with material things. It has rediscovered much in physics, but the "lost arts" of Egypt are still the mystery of the Sphinx. In chemistry it has only recently reached the point of the transmutation of metals and so learned that the supposed folly of the ancient alchemists was scientific fact. In spiritual matters it has made the least progress of all. Skepticism still blinds her victims. Might rules the world with pitiless force and the voice of Compassion, bearing a scientific but misunderstood message, still falls upon unheeding ears.

The "lost arts" are but a fragment of the things forgotten. The great spiritual truths about the evolution of the human race were buried in like oblivion. When some of these great truths are reproclaimed to-day they seem to some to be new and strange. Thus it is with

that wonderfully logical hypothesis of human evolution called reincarnation. It was known and taught in the most ancient civilizations of which we know. It was the highest wisdom of oldest Egypt. It was, and is, the religion of Asia. It was taught by the greatest philosophers of greatest Greece. It is found in the ancient scriptures of the world and the Council of Constantinople, in A. D. 551, is said to be responsible for its elimination from the present Christian Bible. Origen, one of the great authorities among the Christian fathers, refers to preexistence as the common belief, and Clement, of Alexandria, taught it as a divine tradition authorized by St. Paul. Many prominent Christians have held this belief in modern times, and an English clergyman has written a book to show that reincarnation was the great secret teaching of the early Christian religion. Another book has been published devoted wholly to pointing out Bible texts that refer in some way to reincarnation.*

What is this hypothesis of reincarnation, that is to-day challenging the thoughtful attention of the Western world? What is the secret of its vitality that enables it to survive the vicissitudes of all times? It lies in the fact that the hypothesis of reincarnation is a logical state-

**Reincarnation in the New Testament*—Pryse.

ment of the purpose of life and the method of human evolution. It shows the divine origin of the race, the remarkably effective plan by which its inherent powers are being unfolded and definitely sets forth the parallel evolution of life and form with scientific precision. It shows the involution of the universal life into matter, as seed in the soil, and thereafter the evolution of that life through a succession of varying forms adapted to express, at each stage of the upward journey, the attributes and powers thus far evolved.

Turning our attention from this broad field of general evolution to the human race where it now stands, and applying the hypothesis of reincarnation to the individual soul, it shows him with an eternity behind him as well as before him. A one-sided eternity is not logical. Immortality must include past as well as future. It must be independent of time and space. Any explanation of existence that denies man a past is compelled to represent him as a fiat creation called suddenly into existence by some cosmic power—an idea at war with all the known laws of nature.

Now, so long as we talk in general terms, so long as we speak of the evolution of the universal life, most people feel quite sure that that is nature's own truth. Nothing appears more

reasonable. But when we come down to the individual and begin to trace his evolution their difficulties begin. This difficulty undoubtedly arises from the fact that they fail to distinguish between the life and the form through which it expresses itself.

If we are to understand human evolution we must get away from the notion that the body is the self and grasp the fact that the life is evolving itself through changing forms; and that the forms change for the purpose of giving the life within varied experiences. But the life is the same life regardless of even the radical change of form. Observe the form transformation of the frog. At one period of its existence it wriggles through the water serpent-like. A little later it moves over the land with four legs. Perhaps the butterfly is an even more striking transformation and a better illustration of the folly of identifying the life with the form it wears. We see the life of the individual butterfly in three forms, or bodies. We see it in the caterpillar, in the chrysalis, in the butterfly. And yet we know it is the same individual life in all three forms. In the higher orders of life there is necessarily a greater lapse of time between the objective and the subjective periods, and the latter belong wholly to that realm of nature which lies beyond the ken of the physical senses. This change of

form lies at the very heart of evolution. That's what evolution is—an orderly succession of forms growing more and more complex and more adaptable to the unfolding life within. Naturalists have been able to trace the evolution of certain animals backward to a form very unlike the present one. Forms grow more and more complex as evolution goes forward and expanding life needs fuller expression.

The theosophical conception of the soul is that it is literally a fragment of the one Supreme Life, the Logos, or God—an individualized portion of the cosmic mind—and that an immense period of time is required for its evolution; that the major part of the long evolutionary journey is spent in non-physical realms; that periodically the soul—the center of consciousness which is the real man—expresses itself on this material plane; that the reason for that is that here in the physical world there are lessons to be learned that cannot elsewhere be acquired; that the method by which it comes into material expression is to overshadow and very slowly and gradually take possession of a nascent human organism, a baby body, some months before birth. The soul, the center of consciousness, the self, is born with this infant body. It grows from youth to old age. At last comes death—death, the destroyer of that which is no longer

useful. The released consciousness, the true man, passes tranquilly back into the invisible world whence he came. There he transmutes experience into skill, wisdom and power. When that work of digestion and assimilation is finished, whether the period of time required is long or short, the desire for sentient expression awakens, and the attraction of the material world draws the soul back into physical existence once more. Again the consciousness unites with a nascent physical body, which is only an aggregation of atoms, until the soul gives it personality and identity, and birth again starts the soul on another period of experiences at a higher point in evolution than it has yet attained. The new physical body is, of course, not the man but only his instrument of activity for acquiring more, and different, experience.

This return to material life contains no element of chance or accident. A long series of causes and self-generated forces determine his nation, his family, his environment and his position in life. In each incarnation he develops something of both intellect and compassion, leaving the material realm, at the time of death, further along on the evolutionary road than when he arrived at birth and returning in the following incarnation at a still higher point than when he left at physical death. After many

incarnations intellect is evolved to the level of genius, sympathy has grown into compassion and with no more lessons to be learned from the material life the soul passes on to superphysical and superhuman evolutions.

If life is considered from either the scientific or the philosophical viewpoint there is apparently only the choice between reincarnation and materialism. That gloomy philosophy asserts that human life is a brief journey from the cradle to the grave. It holds that mind is the product of matter and that when the form perishes the consciousness is annihilated. It does not admit the existence of any intelligence in the universe higher than that of man.

The more we learn of nature the more difficult does it become to accept the theory of materialism. We know that life and matter are interdependent; that they are always found together; that there is no life without matter and no matter without life, although we may not be able to perceive this any more than we can see that all matter is in motion. We also know that while matter and life are interdependent, mind is superior to matter in that it can control it and mold it. We know that we can consciously build up the muscles in size and strength and that we can, and constantly do, mold the features into expressions of the thought within. Matter is the

material and life the architect and builder. Now, if it be true that life and matter are interdependent and that mind can thus control matter, then it cannot be that matter, the inferior, has produced mind, the superior.

There are many other reasons why the materialistic theory is unsatisfactory. There is evidence on every hand of an intelligent purpose in the methods of nature, of a guiding wisdom vastly superior to that represented by men. A universal and orderly development with an object in view—a never-ending process that science calls evolution—is everywhere going forward. It has lifted the human race from savagery to civilization and is steadily raising the standard of that civilization higher and higher. Selfishness is slowly giving place to altruism. The theory of materialism is not consistent with this fact. It is logically the doctrine of selfishness; the cruel philosophy of the survival of the fittest; and the fittest of an evolution that embraces no higher factor than material development must necessarily be the acme of brute strength and intellectual cunning. Huxley has pointed out that the evolution of virtue in man, his development of compassion, altruism and self-sacrifice, is in direct opposition to the laws of evolution of the physical world. In other words, here is a development of spirituality that physical evo-

lution seems unable to account for, and for which nothing in the materialistic theory does account.

Another fatal flaw in materialism is that it is forced to ignore the law of the conservation of energy. Nature throws nothing away. Yet according to this doctrine the energy represented by the difference between the ignorance of the infant and the knowledge of the adult is utterly wasted; the wisdom garnered during a long life is thrown away at death, because, according to this theory, it could not be retained by the man who ceases to exist and we know it could not, like property, be left to others.

Nature does nothing uselessly. Yet certain faculties have been discovered in man which have no normal function whatever in physical life and the only logical inference is that they must have a use in a superphysical life. In experimental hypnotism it has been demonstrated that the more completely the physical body is subjugated the keener and freer become these wonderful faculties. In the medical world some eminent and painstaking authorities have shown that often, as the physical senses grow weaker through wasting disease, these hidden faculties or soul powers grow correspondingly stronger and reach their most perfect expression near the moment of dissolution. Of course this would

not be the case if mind had its origin in, and depended for its existence upon, physical matter.

Another strong point against the materialistic theory is that it fails to account for psychic phenomena. There was a time when this could be ignored, just as the medical world once ignored hypnotism; but when the most eminent scientists of the civilized world are assiduously investigating the phenomena on which is based the belief that we survive bodily death, and when some of them have made public many facts that can be satisfactorily explained by no other hypothesis, the time has certainly passed when such phenomena can be calmly ignored.

We are forced, then, to reject the theory of materialism. We cannot consistently accept its assumptions about the future when it is not in harmony with the facts of the present.

When we turn from this dismal philosophy we have left but two other explanations of life and its purpose. One of these is offered by Theosophy in the hypothesis of reincarnation. The other is the popular notion that the soul is created at physical birth. The two agree upon the divine origin of humanity and upon the fact of immortality. But they differ widely on other things of vital import.

Broadly, the popular idea is that human beings have come, and are now coming, into this visible

life as we see them at birth, fresh from the hand of God; that a stream of infant souls is being continually poured into the world—a never-ending creation of new beings; that at the farther side of life, called old age, this ceaseless procession of human beings passes into an eternity of some vague sort of which nobody who holds such views pretends to know anything very definitely. At this point the whole matter is dropped in obscurity, with the assertion that those who have accepted the current religion will be eternally happy and that those who have failed to do so will endure eternal pain.

The theosophical view is that, so far as we are able to judge from ascertained facts and from analogy, there are no sudden processes in nature, creative or otherwise; that while all that exists comes directly from the Supreme Being, it is evolved by certain definite processes that we call natural law, this natural law being but the visible manifestation of the divine will; that evolution is a primary fact in nature; that just as the earth, and even all the countless stars, were once a blended fire-mist of nebulous physical matter, which through ages has developed into separate physical structures, so have the thousands of millions of individual souls slowly developed from the spiritual side of the universe, and that they are still evolving in their long evolutionary jour-

ney into great spiritual power and wisdom. It holds that since all known laws are universal in their application, so far as we know, they must apply equally to the evolution of matter and the evolution of mind; that the great law of evolution, now everywhere accepted in the scientific world, holds the entire universe, visible and invisible, in its all-inclusive grasp and that spiritual and material development is being accomplished in one inseparable onward and upward movement.

Any hypothesis that is the true explanation of the life journey will be found to be in conformity with the known laws of the universe. Any hypothesis not in harmony with ascertained facts cannot be a sound one. Reincarnation is in perfect harmony with this great law of manifestation known as evolution, although reincarnation has been taught many thousands of years, while all that science knows of evolution is of comparatively recent acquisition.

Instead of regarding life as a journey in a straight line, an infinitesimal fraction of which is on the earth and the remainder of which is an eternity of either happiness or sorrow in invisible realms, reincarnation presents life as an evolutionary journey on which the soul is moving steadily forward in obedience to natural laws designed to develop its inherent powers. It re-

gards the soul as making a great cyclic journey which has its goal in the Infinite, this vast journey being composed of smaller cyclic journeys which carry it alternately from the physical life to the invisible life and back again. Let us see just how this hypothesis of reincarnation, or the cycle of rebirth, is in perfect agreement with the law of evolution.

What are the striking characteristics of this great law? For a long time science has been studying its visible manifestations in many directions—in geology, in biology, in astronomy; and especially in the latter it has an excellent opportunity to study its operation. Three great characteristics have been observed. One is that this law of manifestation operates in alternating periods of activity and rest. Thus we have the activity of day followed by the passivity of night, and nature's vigor of summer followed by the rest of winter. This law of the alternate flaming out and dying away of nature's forces runs throughout the known universe and applies to everything from the life of insects to the formation and dissolution of planets. Reincarnation, which holds that the activity of life and the passivity of death follow each other in orderly succession, is in perfect harmony with this characteristic.

The second great characteristic of the law of

evolution is that all its movements are in cycles. Nowhere do the astronomers see movement in a straight line, not even by the comets. This characteristic is to be observed in the rotation of the earth on its axis, the revolution of the earth about the sun and the movement of our whole solar system through space. And this cyclic movement is as true of the atoms that make up the rocks, the trees and the bodies of all living things, as it is of the stars. Everywhere there is motion and the movement is in cycles. Again reincarnation, with its cycles of successive returns to physical life, is in complete accord with this characteristic.

There is a third great fact about the law of manifestation. It exhibits not only alternating periods of activity and rest, not only constant movement in cycles, but also constant progress. Cycle follows cycle, but always with the upward movement of a spiral. There is no coming back to exactly the same point. Run your fingers over the keyboard of a piano from "a" to "g," and on upward. Each octave is a cycle. You continually come back to "a," but on a higher key. Once more reincarnation, which shows the soul returning again and again to this physical life, but at a higher point in evolution than in the preceding life, is in full agreement with this characteristic.

We cannot look anywhere without seeing these cycles of nature, the ceaseless round of alternating activity and rest. In the spring the earth begins to throb with returning life. This life-wave touches the plants and trees and they awaken. It creeps into the kingdom of flowers and they burst into bloom. It thrills the songsters of the forests and the melodies of a new year begin. The tide of life swells and rises into the full glory of summer and then begins its steady decline. The twilight of autumn comes. The ripened grain has run its course. The leaves drop from the silent trees. The woodland choristers hush their songs. The snows begin to fall and wrap the earth in her spotless garment of slumber, for the winter is her night of rest.

Even so do we have our alternating cycles of waking and sleeping, day and night, each returning period finding us a little further along on the journey. We rise in the morning refreshed. We begin the day full of vigor. We reach the zenith and, with failing strength, begin the day's decline. At night, worn and weary with sustained effort, we sink into slumber to once more awaken renewed. These little cycles of day and night grow into the cycle of a life. Childhood is its morning, its springtime. We steadily advance to the full vigor of manhood, the noontime of life, the summer of physical existence. Then the

tide of life is reversed. Slowly the strength departs. The twilight of old age creeps on. Finally the shadow of death falls upon the tired heart and it is once more night. And shall there be no morning? Are we to believe that all of nature's laws are here suspended and that we can no longer depend upon her constancy—a constancy that is being ceaselessly proclaimed by every atom in the universe? Just as the day and night alternate, so do life and death, and precisely as we return to the activities of another day after the rest of night, we also return for the activities of another life after the rest of the intervening period; and just as many successive days are required to make up the span of a physical life, so are many separate lives required to make up the span of our whole existence on this planet.

Now, it is a fact which we must not overlook that new ideas always seem strange and unnatural, but that is no argument against their truth and reality. The important point is not whether a given hypothesis seems strange, but whether it will explain the known facts. If we are to reject a thing because it seems strange we could accept but very little that is offered us by science. What, for example, is more wonderful, more apparently miraculous, than the suspension of this earth in space? Here we are, inhabiting what our deceptive senses tell us is a flat body of

land and water perfectly stable and stationary. Yet we positively know that it is spherical, that it has several separate and distinct motions, that it is spinning on its axis at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, and that it is also rushing along its orbit about the sun with such velocity that at this time to-morrow we shall be many hundred thousand miles from the point in space we occupy at this moment. What is more strange, and, from the viewpoint of the physical senses, more improbable than these simplest of scientific facts? Reincarnation will not seem strange to us when we have fully and fairly examined it because its facts will agree with all the other facts we know about the universe. They will show that life has a definite purpose, that nature is working steadily toward the fulfillment of that purpose, and that reincarnation is a logical and necessary part of the process.

There can be little doubt about the purpose of life. The process of evolution, that is steadily lifting the human race to nobler ideals, a growing altruism and a grander life, proclaims this purpose so clearly that he who thinks must comprehend. Can it be anything else or anything less than the production of a perfect humanity? Perfection is clearly enough the goal at which all evolution aims—the production of the highest

possible type, whether in the vegetable or animal kingdoms. If so, this great law can be working toward nothing less than a humanity from which the last vestige of ignorance, cruelty and selfishness has vanished. This is the work of evolution, physical and spiritual.

"—thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

How can a perfect humanity be produced? How can the ignorant become profoundly wise, the selfish become just and the cruel learn the well-nigh impossible lesson of sympathy and compassion? Think a moment of the stupendous change to be made in the race, of the gigantic task evolution has to accomplish in raising all men to god-like perfection, and say whether it can be done in one short physical life!

We can look back upon our lives and see that the world is a school of experience in which we have learned a few lessons. All of us can see mistakes we should be too wise to make again; all of us have learned lessons from the sorrows and heartaches of life that will make us forever more gentle and compassionate. But think of the experience we must yet have to live in perfect peace with all mankind, to never feel the least resentment, to literally "love thy neighbor

as thyself," and to acquire all knowledge, knowing that what we now possess, compared to what lies beyond our present grasp, is little indeed.

Clearly, these stupendous lessons cannot be acquired in one physical life, and equally clear it is that it would not be consistent with nature's law of the conservation of energy to pass us on to other realms until we have learned the lessons here. If we human beings are too wise to send our children to the university when they still have lessons to learn in the kindergarten, we may be sure there are no such blunders in the economy of nature.

How, then, are the lessons of earth to be learned? By coming fresh to the task life after life as a child goes to his school day after day. So, following the laws of development and the movement in cycles that apply to all things from atoms to suns, we live through a physical life in which we accumulate a certain amount of experience. We then pass through the change called death, which is merely the dropping of the physical body, without affecting our consciousness, into a comparatively brief intermediate life in the astral world where a process of purification goes forward. Here we sink gradually into another change in which the astral body is also left behind and the real man, the conscious, thinking being, passes tranquilly into

the mental plane, or heaven world, for a very long period of rest and assimilation. The self-generated forces which brought him here being finally exhausted he is, through the operation of certain natural laws, drawn back into life in the physical world again and thus continues the journey through this cycle of alternating activity and rest, but at a higher point in evolution than he has ever before reached.

By this method alone does sustained and permanent progress for the race appear to be possible. Both the materialistic theory with its annihilation of the individual consciousness, and the common idea of each soul passing into eternity with its modicum of knowledge to return no more, certainly fall short of the requirements of race evolution. But by reincarnation there is perfect conservation of energy and constant progress. No single lesson, no fragment of experience, is lost.

One of the difficulties that many people have in seeing the reasonableness of reincarnation is that the reincarnating soul, coming in the visible form of an infant, does not seem in the very least like a stalwart soul that has been here before. There is apparently nothing in these puny, helpless babies suggestive of our Napoleons, of our Newtons, of our Edisons. On the contrary they have every appearance of nascent beings. So

far as the body is concerned this is true. It is wholly new. And the difficulty lies just here: that people think of this new physical body as fully expressing the soul behind it; but at this age it no more expresses the ego than the first green shoot from the bulb expresses the lily. It is only the vehicle of the soul, the instrument of the ego, through which he is to work in the physical world. For several years he is slowly taking possession of it, and trying to express himself through it with possibly something of the difficulty one who suddenly lost speech might experience in expressing himself with gestures. It is only when the ego has full control of a mature physical body that he could be expected to show forth in all their fullness the powers he expressed at a similar period in his previous life.

But if we have lived previous lives, why do we not remember them? We know how faulty memory is. We can now remember but comparatively little of this life. In all the years of our childhood we can recall but a few trivial incidents. Even in our later life we recall but a small percentage of our multitudinous thoughts and acts. If we can do no better than this, how shall we hope to recall a thing back of the infancy we cannot remember? But there is another difficulty. This physical brain perishes at

death and the one we shall next time have will be wholly a new one. Therefore, those who cannot yet transcend the brain memory cannot possibly recall their past. But there are some who can do this and who do remember past lives as clearly as others remember the events of past days in this life; for while memory is very erratic in the physical body, it is perfect in the soul, and those with sufficiently developed psychic faculties have not the least difficulty in remembering. Every human being has this storehouse of perfect memory and he will sometime reach it in the process of evolution. One reason why we do not sooner reach it is because our whole attention is firmly fixed upon physical affairs. The more the mind is centered upon a certain thing the less can it be conscious of other things. Until we turn the mind to this subject, until we learn something of spiritual life and its nature, we shall know nothing of past lives.

Most people are conscious only in the physical body. They can therefore know nothing of their own evolutionary history until they have evolved to the point where the physical body does not limit their waking consciousness. When they can bring the memory of the soul itself into the physical brain they can know of past lives. The difficulty people have in understanding why all do not remember their past lives

arises from misunderstanding what the physical body is; in regarding it as the self, the ego. They would not for a moment admit that they are materialists, that they believe we are only the physical body and perish with it, and yet they seem to have the materialist's notion that the brain originates thought; that the physical body is the thinker. The brain no more originates thought than a telephone originates the message that passes through it. The brain is merely an instrument.

The ordinary clairvoyant has gone one step beyond the limitation of physical consciousness, but one only. He has gained some degree of astral consciousness, but must still pass other boundary lines before the full memory of all his past flashes upon him. Those who, as yet, have only the physical consciousness are restrained by an impassable barrier. Their waking consciousness being focused in the present physical life, they are oblivious of past lives. It is very much as though a great actor were playing various roles at various times, and when he is playing any particular one he so thoroughly feels and lives the part that, for the time being, he completely forgets his previous roles. He is so concentrated in the effort to portray the moods, passions and emotions of the present character, that he is temporarily oblivious of his other

roles. Even so are most of us now so completely absorbed in the material world that we are oblivious of everything else. The first step toward the recovery of the memory of past lives is to recognize the fact that there have been past lives and to give attention to spiritual thought and progress.

These are some of the reasons why we cannot remember. A still more important and interesting subject is why we should not remember. Whenever we find a certain thing about human evolution, like this failure to remember our past lives, that at first thought seems like a misfortune, we shall find upon closer examination that there is a good reason for it and that it is playing its part in our development.

What is the reason then that we should not remember our past lives? Because they are full of antagonisms that belong much more appropriately to a forgotten past than to a remembered present. That is one reason. It is a blessed oblivion that prevents feuds of the past being living contentions of to-day. Hatred is a barrier to progress. The goal we seek is brotherhood. It must be absolute and universal. No soul that harbors enmity can find the peace it seeks. Wise is he who never permits his anger to survive the setting of the sun. Every feud is a bondage for the soul that endures even be-

yond the memory of that feud. In one life men may be such bitter enemies that the mere sight of each other arouses all the passions of fury, the desire for revenge, the thirst for murder. In a following life they may live even in the same family, and while the antagonism is still strong, it is as nothing compared to what it has been, and still would be, if memory of past events were possible.

There is another thing: No man is ever understood by others. His motives are misconstrued and his acts misrepresented. No matter how good a man he is a great deal of hostility toward him grows up. We make enemies not only by the bad things we do but sometimes by our good work that is neither appreciated nor understood. A single lifetime is about as full of envies, jealousies, hatreds and heartaches, as the soul can endure, and it is well that the curtain falls at last and each of us can begin the accounts of another life with an unmarred page.

Then there is such a thing as a haunting memory which, if we fully knew our past lives, might hang over us now like a pall. When we remember that we have a long evolution behind us and that our tendency to take the wrong course was once much greater than it is now, it is easy to see that there may be events in our past lives that are much better forgotten than

remembered. So great is the distance we may traverse morally in a single life that most people can look back upon events in the first half of the present incarnation and see blunders they are now far too wise to repeat and they would be pleased if these things were forgotten both by others and themselves. Most people are hindered and troubled more or less in the last half of their lives by the mistakes and antagonisms of the first half. If this difficulty were increased by the addition of all the similar things in other lives the effect would be crushing and disastrous. Let us be thankful that we cannot remember until the soul has won the strength to withstand the strain.

If we do not accept the idea of the evolution of the soul, as well as of matter, we shall have great difficulty in trying to account for ourselves as we now exist. If the soul is the product of a long evolution, if we have lived many lives in the past, as we are now living this, then each of us has made himself what he now is. Through many lives under many circumstances he has exercised his choice of good or ill, of right or wrong. He has slowly built up the character he now possesses. He has fashioned his intellect and molded his morals. On the other hand, if the soul is not the product of evolution then it is an outright fiat creation of God, and God alone

is responsible for what it is at creation—responsible for the bad as well as for the good.

Now, if we closely observe the children about us we shall see that they are no more morally alike than they are intellectually alike. Everybody who has given it any thought knows that there is the same moral difference between infants in the nursery that there is between men on the street. One infant is gentle, tractable, adorable. Another is vicious and incorrigible. We have a way of referring to the innocence of childhood. It is true enough if we compare them as a class, with adults. It is true enough if we mean freedom from wrong acts in this life. But it is not true if we mean abstract purity. For we may watch the development from birth and observe that one child is sympathetic and generous as a baby and becomes the protector and defender of animals in early childhood. Another tortures animals, exhibits general brutality and in maturity finishes his career by destroying some human life. We say that poets are born. It is equally true that murderers are born. We have had tragedies where boys only twelve years old have committed atrocious murders and there was nothing in their associations from infancy to shape their course to such an end. Certainly environment does have its influence, and a powerful influence, but we all know that there

are some children who could not be made into criminals in any environment imaginable, while others have become criminals in the most wholesome environment.

If souls are a sudden creation and the poet is born, and the murderer is born, what becomes of the justice of God? If souls are a fiat creation and the genius is born, and the idiot is born, where is the mercy of God? If human beings are created at birth and millions of the bad are born, when the good could as well have been born, where is the goodness of God?

The idea that we are called into existence at birth by a divine decree is utterly absurd. It would make a divine, compassionate intelligence responsible for all the stupendous inequalities of human life and opportunity. The only logical escape from such an impossible position is by the hypothesis of reincarnation. It not only fully accounts for all the moral and intellectual differences between souls when they first appear in physical life but also presents a logical plan of their future evolution. What other hypothesis than that of reincarnation gives any plan at all of future evolution? None. We have our choice of reincarnation or chaos.

The moment we turn our attention to this subject we are impressed with the length of the evolutionary journey man has made to reach the

physical and moral development he now enjoys and with the great task that still lies before him if he is to reach even that degree of perfection that his intellect can now conceive. Now if we believe in the continuity of life at all, if we believe that we are immortal, if we believe that each of us shall exist somewhere, then it needs no argument to convince us that that "somewhere" will be an environment that will evolve in us the things we lack, the qualities in which we fall short of being the finished product of human evolution. Is there a better environment than this earth? Can one imagine a better school of experience than we have in physical life? Take for example that greatest attribute that all must evolve, the god-like thing we call love, or compassion. Where can we best develop that, in some vague heaven or here on earth? How can we best develop it? By singing songs of praise or by lending a hand in human affairs?

Compassion is something we must have. All religions and philosophies agree on that. What is it? To "love they neighbor as thyself." It sounds simple, but its significance is tremendous. It means the realization by each of us that every other human being is a brother; that the same life is being expressed in all forms; that your neighbor is yourself, and that his life and welfare should be the same to you as your own.

What is the truth about our present attainments in compassion? Most people really love a few others. Perhaps there are not many so unfortunate that they do not know of at least one person for whom they would sacrifice life itself. Next to the few they really love, comes a circle of friends. These have their active good will. They will make small sacrifices of time or money for them even when nothing is apparently to be gained for themselves. Next to the circle of friends comes the acquaintances with whom they are on good terms. Beyond that is the great world of strangers, about whom they know little and for whom they would not ordinarily make any sacrifices, however small. The average man regards strangers with indifference and, if one does him any sort of an injury, instead of returning good for evil he will spend time and money to "get even" with him. Truly, we have much to learn before the great virtue of compassion is developed.

What is the environment that will develop this divine attribute of compassion? In what soil will this fairest of flowers blossom? There is at least one easily discovered essential in the evolution of this virtue, and that is close association under conditions where the helplessness of one person appeals to the noblest impulses of another. If you want to find real friendships

look for them among those who have gone through hardships and dangers together, each protecting and helping the other as the circumstances of the moment required. It is here in the physical world, where we are necessarily dependent upon each other, where we are compelled to cooperate to sustain life, that we find the environment suitable for the growth of compassion. Can we conceive of a better arrangement for that purpose than the little group we call the family? There, more nearly than anywhere else, selfishness is subdued and sacrifice for others encouraged. Two egos, the parents, having attained the art of self-support, the art of sustaining life on the physical plane, welcome other egos, the children, when they are utterly helpless and would perish in a day. The most intimate relationship continues for years, in which through hardship, illness, accident and death, through the family sunshine and storm, a comradeship is established that comes nearer to an ideal human society than anything else of which we know. As the years go on the time finally comes when the order of the protecting parents and the helpless children is reversed. As the children become strong and capable, the parents reach old age and change from protectors to dependents. And so in a single incarnation all get the double experience of the helper and the

helped, so well calculated to develop the qualities of the heart. In the vast wilderness of the evolutionary field, swept by the constant storms of human passion, the family group gives the sheltered nook in which this frail plant of love, with its blossoms of self-sacrifice, may grow strong and perfect.

The principle that like attracts like is one of the factors at work in bringing together the group of souls we call the family. It is easier to do helpful things for those like ourselves, those with thoughts and ideals like our own. The less there is of fundamental antagonism the easier it is to act in harmony. The family is a little world in itself, so small that it focuses the feeble forces at work and gives the best possible conditions under which they may be coaxed out and stimulated into activity.

So it is the vicissitudes of life in the physical world that stimulate the evolution of compassion. It is a thing to be evolved amid the hardships of earth, not amid the golden harps of the popular heaven. And when we think of how much of this quality each of us must still evolve, and how excellent a contrivance the physical life is for evolving it, we see at once the reasonableness of reincarnation. We see that we are in a carefully constructed school of experience where we have stupendous lessons to learn and that, in

the very nature of things, it will take many lives to learn them.

While physical life, in the group we call the family, is admirably calculated to foster and develop the heart qualities, the life outside the home is equally potent in the development of intellect. It represents continuous mental exertion. Can we think of anything better calculated to stimulate the intellect, to make the mind quick, keen and alert, than business life? No dreamy heaven can fulfill the function being performed by the ceaseless objective activities of the business world.

We do not need to think long to discover that intellect has far to go before it has reached the evolutionary limit in the race, before the ordinary mortal has attained the mental development of even the most powerful intellects the world has ever known. Where is such development to be made? Where are such powers to be evolved? Where are the stolid and indifferent to find the whip and spur to urge them forward except here in the world of physical activity? And if this life furnishes the conditions especially adapted to their development, and only an infinitesimal fraction of that development can be accomplished in sixty or eighty years, the only logical conclusion is that they will have further experience in this kind of life. It is not

reasonable to suppose that nature has a carefully contrived school for the education of her ignorant children and then, after one short term in it, will force them into an eternal vacation.

If we once admit the evolution of the individual soul to be a fact, and that its evolutionary process will not stop short of the possession of even the highest moral and intellectual qualities that exist in the race, we see at once that one life, and one physical body, are not sufficient for the purpose. In any one life we can evolve only one or two things well, and many others a little. Many a Demosthenes gives a life to oratory and still falls short of his ideal. In the lives of some of the great musicians you find lacking qualities that are sadly needed. Special attention to one thing means neglect of others, and so we find, all about us, one-sided characters. Geniuses are often notoriously out of balance. We recognize their special attribute as admirable, as valuable, but see the absolute necessity of other qualities to go with it to form the ideal man. Reincarnation makes it possible to get these other qualities, and it thus gives balance to evolution.

A difficulty with the theory of one earth-life is that it fails to satisfy our sense of justice. It holds that the soul of man is created at his birth; that he is left free to choose the good or evil during his

lifetime, and will hereafter be held responsible for his choice. If all men came into the world with the same mental and moral equipment and during life encountered the same temptations it would be a very different problem we have to deal with. But when this is not so there is no justice in such a theory of life. One is born in a palace and another in the slums. One is a genius, the other is stupid. One has all the advantages of wealth, the other all the handicaps of poverty. One is surrounded from birth with moral influences under which he can scarcely go wrong if he tries and the other is surrounded with immoral companions among whom he could hardly be honest, if he would. One is well clothed, well fed and lovingly cared for. The other wears rags, subsists upon crusts and is treated like a beast. If two such boys start in life, even with the same mental and moral equipment, it is almost certain that one of them will be a moral success and the other a moral failure. To reward the one who could hardly have gone wrong had he tried and punish the one who had no fair chance to do right, if he would, shocks our sense of justice.

Moreover, if they do come with such inequality from the Creator there is no justice in the original endowment of these souls. Entirely aside from the question of future reward or pun-

ishment, why should one be dowered for life with wealth and the other limited with poverty? Why should one be gifted with genius and the other blighted with stupidity? Why is one given the face and form of an Adonis and the other a distorted body and the features of a fiend? Let us not be so illogical as to say that this is the unmarred work of a just, all-loving and all-powerful Deity. Is it not better to assume that under the old theory we have not found the true explanation of these apparent injustices; that two souls thus appearing on earth, the one with such enormous advantages and the other with such terrible impediments, do not come thus from the hand of God, and that upon closer examination we shall find a satisfactory reason for these striking differences?

When we see such inequalities between human beings at the very beginning of this life we feel that there must be a reason for it if it can be found. There *is* a reason and the hypothesis of reincarnation makes it clear without charging God with such cruel injustice. When we remember that these two souls have come up to their present condition of development through thousands of years of evolution and that the genius of the one is the result of his striving through many lives, while the stupidity of the other is the natural result of his neglect and indifference through

a like period, the apparent injustice vanishes and we see that it is reward of merit in the one case and the incurring of penalty in the other. Each is just what he has made himself. It shows that we ourselves, and not the Creator, are responsible for what we now are. If one begins this particular life surrounded by moral influences, and the other has a gross and immoral environment, it is the natural result of the course of each in past lives. The one who has aspired to lofty things, who has unselfishly sought to help others, who has lived truly and nobly, will naturally be born again in the midst of such conditions. The one who has sought the association of the immoral and depraved, quite as naturally comes back into like surroundings. So the partiality is merely apparent. No favoritism has been shown the one and no injustice has been done the other. One is where he has come by merit and the other is where he is through his own indifference.

But there is another reason for mental and moral differences that has no relationship to personal responsibility. Some souls are younger than others and they are mentally and morally deficient merely because they have not yet had the evolutionary experience which alone can give mental grasp and moral perception. A creative life-wave that brings forth a humanity covers a

vast period, and thus it is that some souls are thousands and thousands of years younger than others. While differences between individuals in the same class or station in life may easily represent the result of special effort, or the lack of it, difference between classes, like those of manual laborers and professional men, or between races like the negro and the white, are indications of a difference in soul age. When the younger souls have had the experience of the older they will have risen to the same moral and intellectual level. The present savage is the genius of the far-distant future.

There are many facts in life which reincarnation alone can satisfactorily explain. In no other way can we account for the presence of great geniuses in the human race. Why does a Kepler or a Copernicus appear among us? How can we account for Hugo or Edison by heredity? Children may inherit physical characteristics, but certainly do not inherit mental and moral ones. If they do, where did Edison get his genius? It is a well-known fact that great men have ancestors of whom the world never heard. This could not be if the theory of mental and moral heredity were sound; for if they had genius to transmit we should have heard of them as well as of their sons or grandsons. Whence come these giants of intellect, sometimes exhibit-

ing their wonderful talents even in childhood? Heredity cannot possibly explain this, but reincarnation makes it clear. These Keplers who can think out the law of ellipses, these Platos whom we call "natural philosophers," these Marconis who can invent things the rest of us can scarcely understand when they are finished, are souls that have given many a life before to these special lines of thought. By no other theory can we account for their appearance in this life already equipped with such ability.

We have had musical prodigies who are ignoramuses; who have not a normal physical brain and who possess little ability to reason. Yet their intuitive knowledge of music is beyond our comprehension. Where did men who cannot acquire such information in this life get a knowledge of music that astounds us? Some prodigies seem to be in possession of mathematical principles as unknown to modern learning as telegraphy was unknown to the Romans. Again reincarnation explains. These prodigies are exhibiting abilities gained in past lives. In some cases their genius can shine out only fitfully through the deficient physical brain they have in this life, but in the future, possibly in the very next incarnation, they may have a normal brain.

"But," it may be asked, "if heredity does not

account for an intemperate father having an intemperate son, or for a whole family being musical, what does?"

The law of association accounts for it. We know that carousing people drift together in certain localities, that musical people group together at concerts and operas, that studious people are drawn together in libraries. Just so are similar souls drawn together in families with unerring exactitude by the principle that like attracts like, modified, of course, by the law of cause and effect; and under this modification a more powerful factor than mutual attraction may be at work and draw into the group some souls with totally different traits. And this is another condition under which the theory of heredity again breaks down. If children do inherit mental and moral traits, why do we have in the same family a rowdy and a gentleman, a miser and a prodigal, a traitor and a patriot, a fool and a philosopher? Why from commonplace parents do we get a genius and from genius mediocrity, if any offspring at all?

Sometimes people cry out against reincarnation as a thing they do not desire. It is often difficult to accept new ideas when old ones are firmly fixed. But that we do not desire a thing proves nothing. Most children would not attend school if they could follow their own de-

sires. In their ignorance of the realities of life they would neglect in childhood those things which their parents, in greater wisdom, enforce upon them. Just so are we, the children of nature, being physically and spiritually developed by a wise plan in spite of our rebellion against things that are infinitely better than we perceive.

Like all other things that have not been much studied, reincarnation is liable to be misunderstood, and one of the common misconceptions is that it holds that the souls of men are as liable to be reborn as animals, as to be reborn as men. Not only does Theosophy hold nothing of the kind, but points out that this would be a reversal of the law of evolution. There is no such thing in nature as going backwards from one kingdom to another. A man may be deliberately wicked, if he will, and set up certain causes in one life that will be more or less disastrous to him in future lives, but he could no more do anything that would cause him to descend from the human to the animal kingdom than an oak tree can be made to shrink into an acorn. Evolution is movement that is forever upward, to higher and always higher types. It may be swift or slow, it may follow many a by-path and sometimes appear to halt and temporarily suspend its mysterious unfoldment, but it never

turns backward to a lower kingdom. And so it is with the various objections to Theosophy. They arise from some misconception of the teachings which, when fully understood, will always be found in harmony with the laws of nature.

Reincarnation is a method of evolution precisely adapted to the requirements of the race as we see it about us to-day. It gives human beings life's lessons in a form adapted to their partial development, and in quantity not overwhelming. It provides the alternating rest periods in which assimilation converts experience into wisdom, after which the soul returns again to active life, wiser than in any previous incarnation. Whatever is gained in each life, be it little or much, is held forever.

The hypothesis of reincarnation can be accepted by the scientific man, because it is in harmony with all of nature's laws and presents a coherent plan of evolution that includes the physical as well as the spiritual. It can be accepted by the Christian because it is in perfect harmony with Christian principles, with exact justice, with the loftiest love, with the widest wisdom, and is therefore consistent with the highest conception of God. It can be accepted by those of no particular faith, but who countenance all things that contribute to the welfare of the race; for it gives the feeling of responsi-

bility that neither materialism nor a vague belief in a future life possibly can. They will see at once that nothing is better calculated to promote general morality than a plan of evolution that brings people back, life after life, in close association with others, to work out and adjust with them the evil they have done. Even the materialist will admit that if to him reincarnation is not a fact, then in the interest of justice, of progress, of the common welfare of the race, it ought to be; and to admit that a thing ought to be, if it is not, is to pay it the highest possible tribute.

We find, in seeking a solution of the problem of life, but three hypotheses to be considered. We are forced to reject materialism because it is at war with several well-settled facts, any one of which would be fatal to it. We find that the popular belief is not in harmony with the known laws of nature; that it represents evolution as a failure; and that it does not harmonize the inequalities of life with the idea of divine justice. The hypothesis of reincarnation does meet the requirements; it is in perfect harmony with the laws of nature and the facts of life; it exactly corresponds to the three great characteristics of the law of evolution; it shows a definite purpose in human existence, and the process by which that purpose can be carried forward to

success. It gives new meaning to existence, new strength to courage and new joy to life; for it places that "hope that springs eternal" in the human heart upon the rock of reason and within the realm of natural law.

Scientific Evidence of Future Life

In the whole of human experience we do not meet with a more vital question than this: "If a man die, shall he live again?" About this question are grouped the fondest hopes and the darkest fears of the human race. Do we live again? Do we meet once more those we have known and loved and lost or do we, through the doorway of the tomb, pass to the dreamless sleep of eternal night? Do we go to extinction in the silence of the grave or do we but step beyond the visible world, welcomed by eager, waiting friends?

To this momentous question the science of our day gives no direct reply. It neither affirms nor denies the hypothesis of immortality. But it does furnish us with certain facts upon the subject and the logical deduction from these facts is that we survive bodily death; that individual consciousness is not dependent upon the existence of the physical body but that with the change called death we enter upon another phase of life as real as the one we are living now.

Occult investigation, which is the method of Theosophy in seeking the solution of nature's

mysteries, carries us at once into the realm of the intangible; but it deals always with facts and with logic. Theosophy is an explanation of the universe that is inherently reasonable. A close examination of its teachings will show not only that they are being corroborated by science, step by step, as science moves on into the hitherto unknown, but that at no point, and on no subject, do they do violence to reason. It is only when we get a partial understanding of some of its teachings that they appear fantastic. A clearer conception of them shows that such teachings as the continuity of life, the law of karma and that great cycle of physical and spiritual evolution known as reincarnation, are in perfect harmony with the known laws of the universe; and a thing that agrees both with all the ascertained facts of the physical world and with our highest conceptions of morality, that satisfies both intellect and conscience, that rings true to the sanity that pervades the universe, is inherently reasonable.

The occult truths upon which Theosophy rests have been taught many hundred years in the Orient, while modern science is but three centuries old; yet science has not produced a single fact that is in conflict with the theosophical teachings, from Kepler's solar demonstrations down to the latest discoveries in evolution. On

the contrary, every step that science takes but confirms the previous teachings of occultism so far as these teachings apply to the visible world that science knows. Thousands of years ago occultism taught evolution as the law of physical and spiritual development; and now comes biology to prove that, so far as science can yet reach, this is true. Generations ago occultism divided the matter of the physical world into solids, liquids, gases and ethers. Science could grasp nothing beyond the gases. The air was its outpost of tangibility. That there was matter yet rarer than it could contact was not admitted; but new discoveries proved the absolute correctness of the occult hypothesis. Among other new forces electricity became known; and electricity is an impossibility without a rarer medium through which to work than that which was then known. Now science recognizes the existence of ether and thus accounts for known phenomena. Theosophy taught that all matter was atomic in its structure while science insisted upon the old division of some seventy original elements. But the great wizards of chemistry came and their cunning wrested more secrets from nature and we found that the physical atom was a composite body.

Why are these things so? How does it happen that science, which is simply another name for

ascertained facts, confirms the declarations of Theosophy made before modern science was born? Why did ancient teachers of occultism comprehend and announce the atomic structure of matter when chemistry was still clinging to an erroneous theory? How did they know of the existence of the ether before the age of electricity?

There is but one possible answer to these questions. It is because the knowledge and wisdom upon which Theosophy rests, the knowledge that comprehends the universe from atoms to suns, the wisdom that comprehends spiritual evolution from men to gods, was known and taught ages ago among the children of men. The world has never been without the few who could see beyond the veil of visible matter. These men of wider vision, these pioneers of the world unseen, were the moral and intellectual treasurers for the human race. With developed psychic faculties they had explored the solar system and studied the laws that produce and guide and mature a universe. They understood the laws of gravity and of ellipses ages before Newton and Kepler were born. They knew the exact movements in the sidereal heavens thousands of years before the Chaldean shepherds began their study of the stars. They knew and taught the psychological laws under which nations and races

come and go before the first impulses of civilization thrilled the barbarians that populated what is now the scientific world. They comprehended matter in every form, and life in every variety, and were familiar with the secrets of chemistry thousands of years before the infant, Modern Science, had lisped a single word. This group of unquestionable facts shows that Theosophy has a method of investigation that reaches the very heart of nature.

Of course Theosophists are not blind to the fact that every solution of great problems must run the gauntlet of ridicule. That has been the history of all great truths. It is the penalty of progress. It is the blind retaliation of the thoughtless, getting even with those who give them the pain of a new idea. At one time in the world's history such opposition took a more terrible form than ridicule. Jesus was killed. Socrates was poisoned. Galileo was persecuted. Copernicus was threatened. Columbus was imprisoned. Bruno was burned. Watt and Fulton were ridiculed and jeered. They were all unselfishly working for the enlightenment of mankind. They had ideas that were of incalculable value to the very people who derided them. They were the sanest of the sane; yet they were regarded as dangerous men. They were denounced as fools and frauds and fanatics, and the hand of malice

was not stayed until most of them were deprived of liberty or life. Original thinkers have usually been the victims of their beneficiaries. Every hand was against them, and every dungeon yawned for them. But in our day the infliction of physical pain has gone out of fashion. We are now satisfied with ridicule. "Crank" and "fanatic" are epithets that some people apply to those who point out new facts that cannot be explained by old theories, and produce new arguments that cannot be conveniently answered. But thoughtful people no longer ridicule new and strange ideas. With such wonders as liquid air and wireless telegraphy before us we begin to comprehend the fact that the invisible world about us is a vast field of unknown possibilities.

Many persons have now developed the faculties which enable them to look into the world where live the so-called dead, very much as with the X-ray any of us can see through a solid board or through living human flesh. The X-ray adds to the physician's equipment an instrument that enables him to examine the entire skeleton of a living man as though no flesh obstructed the vision; and so the scientifically trained clairvoyant has added a faculty by special training that enables him to see and study another world that is thronged with those who have passed beyond this physical life.

It is true that many of the clairvoyants who accept fees for what is commonly called fortune telling, and some of whom are more anxious to please patrons than to state facts, are frequently a disappointment to investigators. As a rule they are people who were born with slight psychic power and understand it as little as the investigator himself. While their assertions and prophecies may often contain enough of truth to indicate the fact that an unseen world surrounds us, they frequently contain enough of error to make them worthless for any other purpose. But there are other persons who have not only developed clairvoyance but who thoroughly understand its use and its utmost possibilities. Under no circumstances do they use it for financial or other personal gain. Their lives and all their powers are devoted to the service of humanity. Their time is employed in the study and investigation of the unseen world and its conditions, in assisting those who have passed from this life into that to adjust themselves sensibly to it, and in teaching those who still remain here as much as possible of the conditions that await them in the future.

The possession of psychic faculties in some degree is becoming so common that those who really desire evidence may find it upon every hand. The persistent investigator quickly finds

that an unseen world exists about us or that scores of reputable citizens whose evidence would be accepted without hesitation on any other subject are, without reason or purpose, willfully misleading us. These psychic faculties are more common among children than adults and from this source is furnished some very strong corroborative evidence. In various parts of the country there have been well-authenticated instances of children under the age of five years who have playmates that are invisible to physical sight but are just as real to the psychic sight of the child as are the members of the family. Such a child knows the names, the habits, and the costumes of its invisible playmates and will spend hours with them in conversation which appears to other members of the family like a talk over a telephone because they hear but one side of it. Such children sometimes receive instructions from their invisible associates in the forming of good character, or the control of a bad temper, which precludes the possibility of there being any sort of self-delusion about it.

What is the explanation of these facts? Why does a sane, healthy child, who is too young to have the slightest interest in our adult concern about these problems of life and death, have visitors from the unseen world and give unmis-

takable evidence of mentally and morally profiting by such association? There is no stronger evidence than the frank and disinterested truthfulness of childhood. During the years of infancy the mind seems to be particularly susceptible to the finer vibrations necessary to astral sight and cases of invisible playmates are common.

From the viewpoint of physical science alone, however, there is most convincing evidence that a human being survives bodily death. While various scientific men have given the world valuable evidence through carefully conducted experiments, perhaps the work which covers the widest range under strictly scientific conditions is that of the late Sir William Crookes, the inventor of the Crookes tube through which the X-ray manifests its wonders, and who was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest scientists of our times. His experiments covered a period of several years, were so often repeated and so severely tested, and are altogether so remarkable and complete, that they leave no room for doubt in the fair and logical mind.

He first proved very clearly and fully the existence of a psychic force by the levitation of heavy articles. A large dining-room table was made to rise eighteen inches in the air without physical contact with the medium, and a chair

upon which one of the scientist's assistants kneeled rose three inches from the floor and remained suspended in space for a period of ten seconds. The next thing was to learn whether there was any intelligence connected with this force. With this purpose in view the scientist rapped out questions by the Morse telegraph code and received answers by the same method. At his request, raps were made either faint or loud, in any particular spot designated, and repeated any definite number of times which he suggested.

Proceeding with his experiments Crookes asked if the directing intelligences could see everything in the room. The answer was "yes." "Can you see the newspaper lying behind me on the table upon which I have placed my finger?" The reply was in the affirmative. "Then," said the scientist, "spell out the word my finger covers." The word "however" was spelled out. Crookes removed his finger and the witnesses satisfied themselves that the word was "however." Nobody in the room had had an opporutnity to see the word and the scientist himself had purposely refrained from looking at the paper before putting his finger down at random upon it.

Having satisfied himself of both the existence of psychic force and the fact that it is directed by an intelligence that is not our own, this shrewd

experimenter next turned his attention toward materialization. The medium he employed was a girl eighteen years old who had at the age of fifteen years developed psychic faculties. She came to the Crookes residence to remain a week at a time, bringing only a small unlocked hand-bag and was never left alone, day or night, some of the family being always with her. No cabinet was used except the curtained end of the library and the scientist had access to it at all times. On this particular occasion seven witnesses were present. Five photographic cameras were in position and no scientific device that could assist in testing the genuineness of the phenomena was neglected. So perfect were the arrangements that the temperature of the room was automatically registered as the time passed. Under these conditions the most satisfactory materializations occurred. Both the medium and the materialized lady were seen together in the full light by all present. No less than forty-four negatives were taken by the cameras. Crookes was photographed standing by the side of the medium and also by the side of the materialized woman. The most careful weights and measurements were taken. It was found that the materialized lady, with whom the scientist freely talked, was four and one-half inches taller than the medium; that she was a blond, while the medium was a bru-

nette; that the medium wore earrings while the other woman did not and that there were many other striking personal differences.

Now, a medium who is a trickster, in his own cabinet, with his accessories at hand and possibly his confederates in the audience, may find it easy enough to deceive people who are naturally credulous; but when this girl with nothing but the clothes she wore, went into the locked room prepared by a trained scientist and produced the results described, the possibility of deception utterly vanishes.

Such experiences are of inestimable value because in what is commonly called spiritualistic seances there has been so much of fraud and deception that many people have come to the conclusion they must be wholly fraudulent; but the practice of deception by those contemptible enough to profit by trickery no more proves the fraudulence of psychic phenomena than a counterfeit coin proves the worthlessness of money. When such scientists as Crookes, Lodge, Wallace, Crawford and Flammarion tell us they have successfully made such experiments we need not trouble ourselves about the ordinary seances for this scientific evidence will be accepted everywhere in the civilized world.

Aside from the experimental work of individual scientists there is a great mass of evidence

that has been accumulated by the Society for Psychical Research. Its membership includes many of the greatest living scientists. Its investigations are conducted under the most painstaking conditions.

We are so accustomed to associating life with visible matter that it is not easy to free oneself from the illusion that life cannot exist except in a visible form; yet we know it does thus exist in the microbes of the air and the animalculæ of the water. Beneath the microscope is another world of life, full of intense activity and as fully governed by the laws of evolution as our own. Yet before the invention of the microscope any hypothesis setting forth this fact would have been denounced as absurd. Is it unreasonable, then, to think there may be other forms of invisible life close to us of which we are equally unconscious?

Because we are unconscious of a thing is not the slightest evidence that it does not exist. We can ordinarily know things only through the senses and only very partially at that. The ear hears. How? One object strikes another and vibration results. These vibrations pass outward from the point of origin, throwing the air into corresponding vibrations. These invisible waves beat upon the tympanum of the ear and there results a sensation we call hearing. Destroy

the eardrum and we shall be wholly unconscious of sound. It will exist, but not for us. While we have it do we hear all sounds? By no means. There is very much in the way of sound of which we are oblivious. Why? Because even the perfect ear can respond to only a limited range of vibration. Beyond that limit we are as deaf as the rocks and the trees.

The eye sees. How? By precisely the same process—vibration. It is quite different, but the difference is wholly in degree and not in kind. The vibrations that result in sound are comparatively very slow. Those of light are very rapid. When we see an object, what occurs? The presence of light has thrown the luminiferous ether into rapid vibration. We turn the eye toward an object. The vibrating ether-waves strike the retina of the eye and set up a corresponding vibration. The brain receives the impression and we are thus conscious of the existence of the object. But when we turn the eye in a given direction do we therefore see all which there exists? By no means; no more than we hear all sound. The microscope is one of the proofs of this fact. We cannot see the animalcule because its body does not contain enough dense matter to reflect sufficient light to affect the retina until we have used the multiplying power of the microscope. Just as there is thus a world

of life that has no existence for the unaided eye, so is there still another which the eye cannot know at all.

A comprehension of these facts makes it clear that, in the very nature of things, we are conscious of but a fraction of what is in existence about us, and that to those things which do not fall within the narrow vibratory rate we can respond to, we are totally oblivious. So, then, we are at present conscious of that part of the universe that vibrates, so to speak, in the key of sight and sound, and we are unconscious of all the rest, though it is close about us.

"But," the skeptical may inquire, "granting all this, is it possible that life and consciousness can exist in matter so rare that it is not palpable to the touch?"

Not only have we the direct personal testimony of trained occultists, as well as the scientific experiments already cited, to prove that this is so, but it is, moreover, a reasonable thing in itself. What does science tell us about this visible body in which we know that we are now living? That it is by no means so dense and solid as our senses would have us believe. We say the hand is solid. But the chemist proves that it is chiefly fluid. We say an apple is solid. But the chemist shows it to be three-fourths fluid. We think of the matter of the body as firm, and at rest. Science

says every atom is in rapid motion. We say it is dense. Science says not a single atom actually touches any other, but that there is space between all the atoms of the physical body; that your brain, your very heart, is but an aggregation of atoms held in their relative position by the cohesiveness of life, and that each atom floats in space as truly as do the stars in the sky. We have the impression of the permanency of the matter of the body—that our hands are the same hands we had last year. Again science positively contradicts it. We have not been clothed in the same matter since childhood. These are no more the same hands we had in past years than our heads are covered with the same hair that covered them last year. Physiologists point out that the matter that constitutes the visible body is constantly changing; that it is forever wearing out and being replaced; that the whole material mass now composing our flesh, nerves, bones, muscles, brain and heart is rapidly passing away without in the least affecting our life and consciousness; that even the enamel of the teeth, the body's hardest substance, completely changes in a few years; and that within that period absolutely every particle of the physical body we now have will have given place to new matter. Thus, according to

science, we are at this moment existing in a body composed of but a small percentage of solid matter which has no permanent relationship to the life which dwells in it, and is so tenuous that no atom actually touches another. If it is possible, then, for life and consciousness to exist in an aggregation of matter where all the particles are actually separated by space, it requires no wild flight of the imagination to understand that after we drop the physical body in the change called death we continue to exist in a body of still rarer matter. And this is really the fact as known to Theosophy and as corroborated by those who have clairvoyant sight. We are born with not only a visible physical body, but with an invisible astral body, constituting a duplicate of the physical. In this body, which is also composed of matter, but of a different and much rarer grade of matter, we continue life in the world unseen.

The world invisible is merely that part of the universe that is beyond the reach of our present faculties, as the realm of microscopy once was. It is what lies beyond the vanishing point of the senses—beyond the grasp of the few methods of consciousness that evolution has thus far developed. It is not a leap into the fantastic. It is but the continuation of the seen, governed as

immutably by law as this, and as much a part of nature and the natural as the hills, the valleys and the sea.

It is not the foolish and the thoughtless who believe in the existence of the world unseen. It is those who think and investigate. It is philosophers, poets and scientists. It is the flower of the ancient civilizations the world has produced. It is the mighty intellects of modern times. It is Shakespeare, whose intuitive knowledge of the human heart transcends our understanding. It is Emerson, whose great mind grasped occult truth and gave us a new world of spiritual wealth. It is Crookes, the magician of the laboratory, too fearless to be stopped by ridicule, too strong to be fettered by precedent, who has led the scientific investigation of psychic phenomena. These are they with whom Theosophists must be classed—searchers for truth, explorers of the world unseen.

"Does this life on these two planes of the unseen world include a recognition of those we have known here?" is a very natural inquiry. A moment's reflection on the laws of attraction and association will show that it could not be otherwise. Passing from the physical plane to the astral through death no more changes one's appearance or characteristics than passing from one house to another. Two people in this life

who greatly desire to be together cannot be kept apart by any contrivance we have yet discovered, and the same principle of attraction operates much more powerfully in the astral and mental life. We shall not only know our friends and be with them, but shall know them much better than it is possible to know each other now, for thought flashes from mind to mind without our clumsy methods of verbal communication.

We need not even wait until we go there to be of service to our friends who have gone ahead. It is quite possible for us now to help the so-called dead by contributing to their serenity and peace of mind. While we can neither see them nor know their thoughts, they can see our astral bodies and know of our thoughts that relate to them; they can at least know how we feel toward them. Everybody in these days understands something of telepathy—the instantaneous transmission of thought from mind to mind. Since the invention of the wireless telegraph this does not seem wonderful, for even as a message is sent without a wire by utilizing ether waves, a thought is transferred from mind to mind through the wave vibrations of a still subtler matter. Thus those we call "the dead" may be in telepathic touch with us and be susceptible to our thought when it is definitely directed toward them.

Now, some of those who have passed on are much in need of sympathetic and loving thought, and their condition can be greatly improved by it. All may thus be helped, but those who have passed from this life suddenly, by accident or by suicide, have strong claims upon our sympathy. Indeed, sympathetic thought is very beneficial to all the departed. Sincere well-wishing cannot be otherwise than helpful. For these reasons all grieving for the dead is a mistake, for it only tends to make them unhappy. We ought not to indulge our own selfish sense of loss and desolation, but be thinking only of the welfare of the one we have lost, and be sending him cheerful, helpful thoughts.

This brief consideration of a great question can give but a few hints on the subject of life in the unseen world, but even that is enough to show the vital importance of acquiring some knowledge on the subject. If we were going upon a journey to some unknown foreign country we should learn all we could in advance of the pleasures we might enjoy and the dangers we ought to avoid. Each one of us is really going upon this journey into the unseen world. Nobody has any doubt about that. If we wisely study the subject now, our knowledge will light the way and make us confident and fearless.

There is nothing more appalling than uncer-

tainty about what follows death. This specter of separation sits at almost every fireside, darkens almost every home. And yet a little thought should convince us that in this sound, sane universe all may be safe. There is no penalty that we ourselves do not create. There is no hell for us that we ourselves do not prepare. Many people are now preparing it by selfishness, hatred and cruelty; but they can stop the unfortunate work at any moment if they learn how and then wisely use the knowledge.

Theosophy is the torch-bearer of the ages. Into this physical life, where hundreds of millions of the human race are enchained in materiality, blinded with incredulity, narrowed with intolerance, groping in ignorance and fettered with fear, comes this goddess of enlightenment and emancipation; and for all who study her wisdom the darkness shall vanish and the fetters fall, and in her illuminating flood of reason they can face the future without a doubt and without a fear.

Beyond the Borderland

We live in a world of delusions and the greatest delusion of all is the belief that we are conscious of what exists about us. Listen to what a scientific man, Garrett P. Serviss, has to say of the failure of the physical senses to acquaint us with our environment:

"We are accustomed to regard sight and hearing in their normal state as perfect senses, but their imperfection, or rather the narrowness of their range, becomes every day more evident. If we could really see and hear everything which the vibrations that cause light and sound would reveal to eyes and ears so constituted as to translate to the brain the impressions of waves of any length whatever, this earth and this universe would become far too wonderful for comprehension by existing human intelligence. The sunlight deceives us by its brilliancy. We fondly think that it shows us everything, but in its very midst we are like blind animals in a cavern, not aware of objects that stand all about and impend over us. * * * What is true of the face of the earth is equally true of the broad universe beyond. We do not know what we are living amidst, or what companions our sun and his planets have. Many of these things lie just beyond the ordinary reach of our senses."

This astronomer is referring to physical matter only, and is pointing out the failure of our physical senses to acquaint us even with that. It is clear that by the use of the physical senses we do not know, and cannot know, what is in existence about us.

Occasionally we meet a man who declares that it is not important to know of anything we cannot see, or hear, or touch. He takes much satisfaction in asserting that he is "practical" and says that "one world at a time" is the sensible thing. But why should we insist upon one world any more than upon one science? If we gave our attention to geology because it deals with the things the hands can grasp, and ignored astronomy because it does not, we should miss some of the most inspiring lessons of life. One science at a time would mean being one-sided; and that is just the difficulty with the cry of "one world at a time." It means deliberately ignoring some of the factors in the problem of human progress. It means closing our eyes to useful and vital facts. It means rejecting information about a most important part of the environment in which we live; for close analysis will show that it really is all one world, but that beyond the limitation of the physical senses is a vaster region, thronging with a multitudinous population, pulsing with an intenser life and rich in the lessons of a wider wisdom.

Now, the moment we begin to deal with facts like these, that are too new to have become established, we are confronted with that incredulity that is at once the safeguard against rushing headlong after will-o'-the-wisps, and also the

greatest difficulty that lies before the pioneers in the field of human progress. Every pioneer of thought who has blazed out a new path in some unknown direction, has been assailed by the ridicule of those who admit they do not know the way themselves and, by the same token, feel sure that nobody else does. This has been true of all the philosophers, the inventors and the discoverers.

The savage aborigines of America had a custom, when a prisoner was captured, of forming in two parallel lines, armed with clubs, and compelling the captive, as the alternative of torture, to run this gauntlet. If struck down by some bludgeon that ended the game. If fortunate enough to live to reach the end of the line he escaped with his life, if he did not afterward succumb to his injuries.

Our civilization has a somewhat more refined method, but nevertheless it has its gauntlet of torture. The critics and the incredulous are, so to speak, drawn up in double columns; and down this line, past the bludgeons of ridicule and slander, have passed the best and the bravest souls this world has known. Ridicule is the most powerful weapon that can be used against a new idea and the more profound that new idea is, the more effective is such a weapon against it. The farther the new conception is from the men-

tal grasp of a man, the more ludicrous it will appear to him. An astronomer, talking to a scientific audience, would appear sane enough to that audience; but if he were lecturing to a plantation gathering that believed the earth to be larger than the sun and the stars to be very much smaller, his statement of scientific facts would be the merest nonsense in the eyes of that audience, because his wisdom is being measured by the yardstick of human ignorance.

New ideas that are considered idiotic in one century become the wisdom of the next. If, at the close of the sixteenth century, Columbus could have addressed an audience at Genoa, his ideas on geography and astronomy would have been hailed as the new wisdom. But a hundred years earlier, when the great discoverer was engaged in that pathetic struggle against human ignorance, he was running civilization's gauntlet of ridicule. The idea that the world was flat was then universal. It was harder for even an educated man of that day to believe it round than for a materialist now to believe in the invisible world. Imagine, if you can, Columbus arguing the matter to an audience before he sailed. Just think what an opportunity ridicule would have had! Some critic could arise and hold up an orange: "You say the earth is shaped like this, and you will sail around it. Why,

when you get underneath, you fool, you'll simply drop off." Think how that would have brought down the house! "And you say," continues the critic, "that a ship can sail west from here and keep on sailing west until it comes home from the east; that all anybody has to do to get into the east is to keep going west." Such an attack would have set the crowd against Columbus and every ignoramus in that audience would have roared with laughter.

Columbus knew that he was right, but he could not demonstrate it by any knowledge that the majority possessed. Like the occultists of to-day he was proclaiming that the little world which the people felt so sure was the whole world, was only a small part of it. And the people, being unable to grasp an idea so utterly at variance with all accepted beliefs, made him run the gauntlet of persecution. Nothing was so much needed as the new world he proclaimed —an outlet for imprisoned humanity, an escape from the tyranny of kings, an asylum for the persecuted, a virgin soil for the growth of liberty. He was about to confer a boon of the greatest material value that ever fell to the lot of the human race; but they could not understand it and they made him run the gauntlet. Defenseless in this pitiless storm of ridicule, turned like a beggar from the doors of opulent

ignorance, bowed beneath the bludgeonings of coarse abuse, but never faltering for a moment in his splendid purpose, Columbus is at once the most sublime and the most pathetic figure of modern times.

The incredulity of the world is nearly as great to-day as it was in the time of Columbus. When he returned from his great voyage to the undiscovered continent, he brought back the tangible evidence of its existence, including some of the red men of the wilderness. But still the incredulous scoffed and declared that it was all a fraud and that he had not found a new country at all.

Now, the fate that befell Columbus has been the fate of the pioneers of the world of wider thought in all times. The attitude of the public to-day toward occultism is precisely that of the public then toward Columbus. Occultism has proved its case again and again; but even the fact that the proof comes from the greatest scientists of our day in no wise disconcerts those who cannot see the woods on account of the trees obstructing their vision. It is nothing against the facts of psychic research that they are not promptly accepted by the majority. It is nothing whatever against the work of Crookes and Lodge and Crawford that the facts they have proven are not readily accepted by the scientific world; for the scientific world is notoriously con-

servative. Even discoveries of the most material character have met with the same reception. In science, precisely as in religion, every pioneer has had to fight for every forward step. Mesmer, and all his followers, were ostracised and the facts about thought force were utterly rejected by the medical world for more than a generation. Finally, under the name of hypnotism, they became established. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood was received with the same incredulity and ridicule. It is now difficult to believe it, but this momentous discovery that has been of such incalculable value to the science of physiology made Harvey the butt of ridicule for half a century, or more, and it is said that so great was the opposition of the learned men of that time, and later, that a candidate for admission to the French Academy proved his worthiness for membership by preparing a paper refuting Harvey's theory!

The same sort of abuse fell to the lot of those who first ventured to say that meteors fell upon the earth. For a long time stories had been in circulation about people having seen meteors falling to the ground and some declared that the great stones were hot. This was accepted about as the majority now accepts stories of people who have had a psychic experience of some kind. Finally, only about a century ago, a scientific

society sent out an expedition to investigate; but long after the proof was furnished the public continued to doubt and scoff. Even the application of steam to machinery, that revolutionized industry and is now so commonplace that we give it little thought, was greeted with a storm of thoughtless abuse. The first experimenters with steam narrowly escaped the lunatic asylum at the hands of their enlightened contemporaries! We know how, in America, Fulton was regarded and how the "wise" people of his day dubbed his first experimental steamboat "Fulton's Folly." When the possibility of using steam instead of sails to cross the Atlantic was seriously suggested, the determined opposition rose like an impassable mountain barrier. It was declared to be dangerous and impossible, and the men who have proved such great benefactors to their race were denounced with righteous indignation. In England a scientific man came to the rescue of a failing cause by writing a pamphlet demonstrating just how steam navigation of an ocean is scientifically impossible; and he is said to have gotten his pamphlet ready for the public just in time to be brought to America on the first steamer that made the trip!

When we recall such things we need not feel discouraged because the facts about the invisible world, demonstrated and verified again and

again by our greatest scientists, are not quickly accepted by the public. It is the same old conflict between progress and conservatism that has raged about every milestone erected by the fearless pioneers of the race.

The difficulty that most people seem to have in accepting as facts the phenomena that come to us from the region that lies beyond the border line of the physical senses is that they regard these things as simply impossible and at that point they drop the whole matter without further consideration. Like those who were incredulous regarding the discoveries of Columbus, the new ideas are so startlingly unlike their old ones that they seem to them miraculous and impossible. When they read the statement of Sir William Crookes that a bell was brought into a locked room and that this particular bell was, to his certain knowledge, upon a shelf in the adjoining room but a moment before, they declare that although the scientist's precautions appear to preclude the possibility of deception being practiced upon him, nevertheless for matter to pass through matter is simply impossible, and they refuse to think any more about it. It is this foolish attitude of mind that prevents them making progress in psychic investigation. They chain themselves to old and erroneous notions by refusing to examine anything that does not

harmonize with those notions. They assume that matter cannot pass through matter simply because it cannot do so in those forms of matter with which they happen to be familiar. They know that a stone cannot be freely and instantly passed through a board, or passed through it at all without shattering the board, and so they conclude that it is some sort of deception and refuse to go further. The vital thing which these people forget is that matter can assume many forms and that while a solid cannot move through a solid, if one of these solids is changed to a liquid, or a gas, it can then do so and may afterwards become a solid once more.

Let us suppose, by way of illustration, that a chemist should set up his laboratory in some tropical country where the natives were as ignorant of the fact that water can freeze as most people are ignorant of psychic laws. This chemist could easily produce a block of ice. He could show this solid to these natives of the torrid zone and assert that he could put that solid inside a solid iron box, of about the same size and shape with a top made of solid iron bars so close together that they almost touched each other. This would appear miraculous and impossible to those people, but to the chemist it is very simple. He has only to change the form of this particular aggregation of matter to a liquid, pour

the liquid into the box and again reduce it to ice.

Now, when the bell was brought through the wall in the residence of the English scientist, nothing any more miraculous or "impossible" was done. In the illustration the solid ice was disintegrated, and in its liquid form the matter was passed through the iron bars. In the psychic demonstration the bell was disintegrated and in its etheric form the matter was passed through the wall by the use of the etheric currents, of which the physical senses are necessarily as unconscious as we are unconscious of atmospheric pressure. Once inside the room the bell was reintegrated by reversing the process of disintegration, precisely as was done with the ice. The one is no more "impossible" than the other.

Materialization is a thing so wonderful to those who have not studied the subject, and is so entirely foreign to our usual materialistic conceptions, that it has long been the favorite point of attack by those whose incredulity will not permit them to fairly investigate the matter. We can see the reasonableness of the disintegration of matter by vibration—how the rate of vibration is raised until matter in its solid state is changed to matter in its etheric state, at which point it would be invisible. Materialization is merely the reverse of this process. It is

the condensation of matter by lowering its rate of vibration until it becomes sufficiently condensed to be seen by physical sight. It is no more miraculous than the condensation of the air from its invisible, gaseous condition to its visible, liquid condition.

Sometimes incredulous people ask why, if materializations are genuine phenomena, it is necessary to have them occur in semi-darkness; the inference being that there is some trick or fraud that must be concealed. As a matter of fact there is much evidence from scientific men to the effect that they have seen materialization in light sufficient for accurate observation, and some of them with specially arranged lights of their own have been present in the cabinet when materialization was occurring.

"But why," it is sometimes asked, "have even a subdued light? Is not that in itself suspicious? Why not abolish the cabinet entirely?" For the same reason that we cannot abolish the dark-rooms in photography. Living people can recall the fact that in the earlier days of photography it was considered by many to be somewhat mysterious and a few of the most incredulous, who were as fearful as they were ignorant, declared that to take a piece of paper and catch the image of a man upon it savored of black magic and they would have nothing to do with

it. It is easy to imagine that such persons looked upon the photographer's dark-room with the eye of suspicion, as being the most probable place where the Devil was secreted! We can imagine such a person saying that he was ready to believe that a photograph was not the product of the black arts whenever they would abolish the dark-room and show him the whole process in the honest daylight.

The cabinet has its legitimate place as well as the developing room. Just as we cannot possibly have a negative develop in the light we cannot, under ordinary circumstances, have a materialization produced in full light, but after it is produced it may be held to that rate of vibration long enough to be seen and photographed in brilliant light. Those who, from the invisible side, are producing the materialization, are slowing down the vibrations of matter by an effort of the will and the intense vibrations of brilliant light are working directly against them. It is a special feat of endurance and it has its limitations like all other forms of endurance. But in spite of limitations and difficulties it has been demonstrated to many people and among them are the leading scientists of France and England. As for those who have not observed it, they can at least see that it is within the realms of the probable, and that it appears no

more miraculous than many scientific processes with which we are acquainted.

Another fact that many people discredit simply because they cannot understand it is clairvoyance. Some are willing to admit that the clairvoyant can describe the past but when you tell them that the clairvoyant can also predict the future they cannot believe it. They say that it is not reasonable that anybody can know of a thing before it occurs. It is a matter of personal knowledge to many people that events can be accurately predicted and instead of closing our eyes to such facts it is the wiser course to try to understand them. The point that people commonly overlook in this matter is that the thing we call an event is but the outward effect of inner causes. Everything that exists in this world of the physical senses first exists on the inner planes of the universe. Every drama of life and tragedy of death that is enacted in physical existence is the result of causes we have generated in the intangible world of mind and emotion. By our thoughts and our desires we are constantly setting forces in motion which will culminate in various ways, and at various times, in the visible world.

Now, there is a certain class of these self-generated forces that may be called ripened karma. It is that particular portion that is

ready to precipitate into the physical world; that part that has passed the point where any modification of the force set going can take place; and this is the sort of event that the clairvoyant may accurately predict. To illustrate: Some time ago there was a railway tragedy in a western state, where only single tracks are used and the stations are long distances apart. The train dispatcher had ordered the telegraph operator at a lonely way-station to hold the westbound train until the eastbound train had passed his station. Upon receiving the order, instead of instantly displaying the signal that would have held the train, the telegrapher, who had been many hours without rest, turned his attention to another matter for a moment, and —fell asleep! He was awakened by the thunder of the train as it rushed past his station. Realizing that nothing could then be done to prevent a collision he simply wired the train dispatcher of his fatal blunder. That official, instantly realizing that a wreck was inevitable, ordered out the wrecking crew, sent messengers for physicians and got a special train ready to take them to the scene of the coming disaster. While this was occurring the two trains were rushing along toward the culminating point of the tragedy. The people upon these trains were wholly unconscious that death was near; but

other people knew it; knew that certain causes that would result in this disaster had been set going and that no power on earth could prevent them working out to their awful conclusion. If we know the causes that lie back of an event, we also know of the event; for they are merely two aspects of the same thing. The inner planes are the world of causation, and the clairvoyant has developed a faculty that enables him to see that world.

In clairvoyance, as in anything else, there are many degrees of development and perfection, and the accuracy of a description or of a prediction, depends upon this. The faculty may be feeble and uncertain or highly evolved and accurate. There is the clairvoyant who has very slight development, and can reach only the lower subdivisions of the astral plane, and there is the highly evolved psychic scientist to whom both the astral and the mental worlds lie open; but even the most highly evolved clairvoyant with whom we are likely to meet may not be able to see all the factors that in various ways may modify the forces generated, and therefore his predictions may go wrong.

Premonitions are another thing that many people are inclined to reject because it seems so impossible that a person himself, without even the help of a clairvoyant, can get any kind of

information about the future; and yet there is abundant evidence that this often occurs. There are many well-authenticated instances of people having a premonition of death and talking of the matter to others before death came to them soon afterward.*

What is a premonition and what purpose does it serve? It would be easier to understand that if we could only get rid of some of the illusory ideas we have about what a human being really is. We are so used to thinking of our physical bodies as being ourselves that any phenomenon that cannot be explained on physical grounds alone, greatly puzzles us. If we could only realize that the physical body is but an instrument for the use of the self in the material world and that, at our present stage of evolution, our full consciousness cannot at any time come through into the physical brain—that the ego is but partially expressing himself and is continually endeavoring to impress upon his physical brain thoughts and ideas—we should begin to understand premonitions.

But why, it may be asked, is it so seldom that such premonitions come. If the self, the soul, is continually trying to impress the physical brain, it may be supposed that it would be a more

* See *Dreams and Premonitions* — Rogers. Also *Dreams* — Leadbeater.

common experience. We all know that we have many moods and that sometimes we are much more impressionable than at others. It is only when there is a certain rare combination of conditions and circumstances that we are able to get these impressions called premonitions from the soul.

But why, it may again be asked, should the ego desire to impress the physical consciousness with the fact of approaching death? Because it is much better, especially in the case of sudden and violent death, to have some warning of it. We can see even from a physical plane view of it that it is better to know, but there are also occult reasons why death should be met coolly, quietly and with fortitude. Courage is our best friend when we stand at the gateway to the wider life and those who give way to fear and despair are following the worst possible course. Now, a person who knows what is coming is prepared for it. He is not taken by surprise and thrown into a state of panic. He meets the situation with fortitude, and sensibly adapts himself to the conditions of the new life in which he finds himself.

Sometimes these premonitions come to people as dreams. This is because upon awakening from sleep they retain a memory—and occasionally it is a clear and vivid memory—of what has

been occurring during the slumber of the physical body; for of course the soul does not sleep, and when the body does the self is not in the body at all, for the consciousness has been transferred to the astral body. So when we fall asleep at night we are all beyond the borderland—we are no longer in the world of the physical senses. We are functioning temporarily in the invisible astral body, just as the so-called dead are doing regularly. We are then with the misnamed dead, enjoying their society as we used to do before they lost their physical bodies.

If we are thus with our departed friends during sleep it may, at first thought, seem like a great misfortune that we cannot bring a full memory of it into our waking consciousness, and we may be inclined to think that this arrangement could be improved; but further thought will show that there are good reasons why it is as it is. One of these reasons is that there is a tremendous difference between the physical life and the astral life. If we could retain in the physical life the full, vivid memory of the glories of the astral life, where we spend the night, it would be much like a man living one day in a palace and the next day in a dungeon. Every other day he would dwell in the life-giving sunshine amidst the most beautiful surroundings, where the very air pulsed with enchanting music,

where there were congenial friends and abundant leisure, and life was free from care; and each alternate day he would live in a gloomy dungeon, devoid of light, with a stifling atmosphere, with labor constant and wearing, with cares many and perplexing. If he must live that sort of a life every other day it would be well for him if he could not bring into it the memory of his life in the palace for it would, by its striking contrast, make the dungeon life well-nigh unendurable. It would distract his attention from such duties as he might be discharging in his gloomier existence and, in spite of his best efforts, his mind would be full of intense longing for the palace and its radiant life. It requires the strength that comes only with the soul's further evolution to endure calmly such sharp contrasts and tenaciously work faithfully on in the comparative gloom of the physical plane; for gloom it certainly is compared to the life of that part of the astral regions inhabited by those who reach the other side in the appointed way of nature—death by old age or disease.

Although we may feel that this separation from our friends, caused by the loss of their physical bodies, is cruel and that the failure to remember the hours spent with them on the astral plane at night only makes the separation

more complete, nevertheless we can see that such separation is not without its utility in our evolution. Separation arouses love and appreciation and awakens us to the true value of comradeship. Some people are aroused from settled indifference only by the shock of death that takes a friend or companion from them; and then through the loneliness that follows they see both themselves and the lost one as they have never seen before, and understand more clearly the purpose of life.

That portion of our existence that is spent in sleep is of great importance to each of us. This period while the physical body is resting and the self, the ego, is functioning in the astral body occupies about a third of all our time. It will be seen at once that it is a matter of supreme importance to utilize instead of waste those hours; for it would mean adding one year for every two, or a gain of fifty per cent on the waking period of a lifetime. Now, when we are awake our consciousness is functioning through the dense matter of the physical brain, and that is a limitation. In sleep we are free from that limitation and we can, if we will, not only utilize the time that would otherwise be lost but can make it count heavily for our mental and moral development. We have all heard of instances of students retiring at night perplexed over a math-

ematical problem and rising in the morning with the puzzle solved, although with their last waking thought they were as far as ever from a solution. The explanation is not difficult. When sleep came, the ego, the thinker, passed from the physical to the astral body, in which the keener use of his faculties enabled him to find the solution, or he may have obtained help from others more learned than himself. Upon awakening he simply had the good fortune to remember what he had acquired during the night.

It does not require much thinking to see that a knowledge of occult laws enriches our moral and intellectual life. It widens our world more than the discovery of Columbus widened the world of his day. It gives a better understanding of our environment. It gives a sane and balanced conception of the universe. To know as much as may be of that part of our world that lies beyond physical perception is of transcendent importance to the welfare of the race. Knowledge is the destroyer of superstition. All the follies and the cruelties of the Inquisition had their origin in superstitious fear. All the horrors of witchcraft had their basis in ignorant terror of the unknown. As occult knowledge increases fear disappears and superstitions vanish. Courage reaches its best estate. Life loses the

gloom of uncertainty. Death unmasks and shows a smiling face. Destructive cruelty, inspired by helpless terror, ceases, and life and liberty are safe in the reign of peace and reason.

The Soldier Dead

Never has there been more urgent need for information about the life after bodily death. Never have the people so longed for evidence that we survive the loss of the physical body, and for some definite knowledge of that invisible world from whose mystic shores come only faint and uncertain echoes from those who have passed beyond. We have emerged from the world war, and the shadow of death is upon us. Two millions of our young men crossed the sea and thousands of them will never come back.

What will be the fate of those who do not return? Have they ceased to exist? Was the life so heroically given for the common cause extinguished like a flame that is blown out, or do they continue to live and think and feel despite the loss of the physical body? And if they do, what then? Does the teaching and the preaching familiar in our childhood days hold good—the revivalist's fervid pictures of the hell that yawned for the majority of mankind—is that a fact in nature? Did those brave fellows pass from the battlefield to dangers and sufferings greater than those they escaped? Reason rises

in rebellion against such a conclusion. Instinctively we know that it cannot be true; that it would be contrary to the reasonable and the probable; that it would violate the law of the consistent relationship between cause and effect; that a result so monstrous could not possibly come from a cause so absolutely its opposite.

Unfortunately the world has done very little careful thinking about religious beliefs. They are accepted in childhood before we are accustomed to reasoning about anything. Our parents accepted them in the same way before us, and theirs before them. And thus the thread of unreasoning acceptance runs backward to the ignorant, bigoted and superstitious monks of the Middle Ages, who knew much less about the truths of nature than the modern pupil of the common schools.

Probably no other teaching ever persistently forced upon humanity for centuries has done such incalculable harm, and caused so much useless misery, as the false and blasphemous belief that multitudes of people pass from life here to an existence of terrible suffering beyond; false because it is in contradiction to every known fact upon the subject, and blasphemous because it attributes to God an attitude toward man that would be called infamous in a human father toward his son. One of the really astound-

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ing facts of our times is that the majority of those who most vehemently exhort us to avoid the horrors of the life beyond do not pretend to personally know anything about that life. They merely repeat the beliefs of others who lived before them. But the world has taken it all as a matter of course until death has come to be the very king of terrors—an ever-haunting fear that destroys the joy of living. And to this sad view of the future the materialist adds his lament, and declares that death ends all; that the body and the consciousness that animates it perish together.

Is there no escape from this incubus, no consolation for the fearful, no ray of hope in death's dark night? Science is beginning to answer that question in a confident tone, and Theosophy in a joyous one, for it is both a science and a philosophy. It meets the despairing cry of the mourner with evidence and arguments which show that the hope of immortality is sustained by facts that invite the keenest analysis, and by hypotheses that will pass the severest tests of logic.

One bit of evidence, well worthy of mention in passing, is the widespread intuitive belief in immortality. The skeptic may reply that this is no evidence at all, since a mere belief cannot prove anything. But when that belief arises

from the very source of being, when it is sustained and justified by an analysis of the essential nature of consciousness, when it cannot be rejected by the minds of even the greatest agnostics themselves, when the presence of death has brought the mind to its keenest realization, it can hardly be denied that it is evidence of genuine value. A single instance will illustrate the argument. Col. Robert G. Ingersoll was America's greatest agnostic. He demanded a reason for everything. He took nothing for granted. His giant intellect was a crucible in which every sophistry of superstition turned to ashes. His invincible logic shattered every false dogma and exposed every fallacy of erroneous belief. And having demolished the antiquated and inadequate beliefs of his times, he said of the future, "I do not know." It was the sincere declaration of a great soul groping in the darkness of the physical realm. But when death entered his family circle, when he stood by his brother's corpse, stricken with a grief that lifted a noble nature to its sublimest reach, intuition spoke above reason and he did know! In that eloquent and pathetic funeral oration Col. Ingersoll said:

> Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless

lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word. But in the night of death Hope sees a star and listening Love can hear the rustle of a wing.

With such a declaration from the greatest of agnostics, who shall say that the unshaken, and unshakable intuitive belief in immortality is not of the nature of real evidence? But we are not, of course, dependent upon it. The concrete evidence from both physical and occult science is voluminous. It consists of the experiments of the eminent scientists of the various nations, establishing the fact of the continuity of consciousness; of the investigations of the trained clairvoyants; of the massive volumes of carefully gathered evidence accumulated by the Society for Psychical Research; of the books by the great psychologists of the type of the late Prof. William James, of Harvard University; of the work and testimony of innumerable mediums, of every class, from the professionals to the members of the family circle; of the personal experiences of thousands of bereaved people who are sensitive enough to have caught some token wafted backward by those who have passed beyond; of the testimony of others who have seen visions and dreamed dreams that reveal something of the life of another world; of the work of still others who, by automatic writing, have recorded messages from that land unknown to any physical sense; and of the declarations

of that ever-increasing number of people whose evolving sensitiveness gives them occasional flashes of consciousness on the plane where the so-called dead still live.

Now, there is one most impressive thing about all this evidence and that is that all these witnesses are in perfect harmony and agreement, and corroborate each other. They all report substantially the same facts, all tell the same story. They present it from different viewpoints, and in different language, and differ in trifling details, as we all do here in our views of things, but on the main issue and all its essentials there is common agreement. Scientist, psychologist, clairvoyant, automatic writer, medium, dreamer, sensitive and seer, all recite the same facts about the life after bodily death; and if we trace the story backward through earlier civilizations we find that the mythology of Greece and Rome presents precisely the same truths about the invisible side of nature that modern investigation discloses.

But of all the evidence available the student of the occult naturally turns to the investigations of the psychic scientists as being the most complete and satisfactory. They are people far advanced in human evolution and they have developed, by special and long-sustained efforts, a type of clairvoyance that may truly be called scientific; for

it is as accurate as the X-ray and enables them to study the life beyond death with the greatest deliberation. In studying life after death in the light of such knowledge we shall find that many popular delusions disappear, the mystery of why it is hidden from us clears away, and death completely loses its terror.

Every process of nature is beneficent, and death is but an incident of life. Life is eternal existence and what we call death is but the close of one chapter and the beginning of another. The real man can no more die than the sun can cease to shine. For him there is no death—no cessation of consciousness. You, the real self, do not grow old. The spirit is eternally young. Take thought of the matter and you will see that in your mind you are as young as when you were a child. You do not seem to yourself to be old—unless you think of the aging body—and you are not old. Eternal youth is yours and forever shall be. It is the physical body only that grows old and dies. And what is it? A mass of physical atoms held together by the cohesive force of the life-consciousness and serving as the anchorage of the man to the material world. But from his birth the man has had all the time another aggregation of atoms of a rarer kind which even the scientific men are beginning to call "the astral body." That body, while beyond the ken of sight

or touch, may, under certain conditions, be so clothed with condensed etheric matter as to become visible. The experimenting scientists have seen it, photographed it, and held conversations with the so-called "dead" person temporarily living in it. There is absolutely no longer any question about such facts. Details of the experiments have appeared in books and in scientific journals over the signatures of the most eminent living scientists. One who denies it or ignores it is in the position of those who still insisted that the earth was flat and stationary after the unexpected truth about it had been published. That truth of the earth's rotundity seemed to contradict, and did contradict, the evidence of the physical senses; but it was nevertheless the truth, just as these psychic phenomena are the truth, notwithstanding the marvel that they are.

Death has to do only with the physical body, and it is but a machine that enables the man to focus his consciousness on the material plane and move about here. That living machine wears out, or breaks down, or meets with violent destruction, and the man is dead to the physical world. But he is not dead to superphysical planes. He continues to live but he lives elsewhere; and in that elsewhere, life is just as important to him as it is here.

When death is looked at in the light of evolu-

tion, it is never a misfortune, whether it comes to the old or to the young. Every human being must die. There is a right time for him to die and that time is when he does die. I do not mean to say that some men do not go earlier than they would have died had they been less reckless about their health and physical well-being. A man may pass on at forty who should have lived to see sixty summers. But I do mean that if we take into the account both the present life and those that are past, all the forces generated by the man, all the mistakes he has made and all the lessons he must learn from them for his future welfare, then his life here closed at the propitious moment. It is true that from the viewpoint of those who remain to mourn his death he might well have lived here longer; but it is not so when looked at from the viewpoint of his personal welfare. One reason why we fail to see that is because we are blinded by our selfish sense of loss, and also because we do not take his life after death into consideration. We erroneously assume that this narrow, limited life of the material plane is the only real life and vaguely think of the life beyond as a condition but little different from sleep. As a matter of fact death ushers us into a wider realm of consciousness—into a world of matter, of force, of form, of purpose and of enterprise.

When a young man dies people usually say, "Oh, what a loss! He was just ready to be useful." The very fact that anybody can regard death as a loss shows that they do not understand death. Nature knows no losses. Her great law of the conservation of energy is always at work. The error is in supposing that the activities of life and consciousness cease because the physical body is dead. Whatever the young man has acquired that is mental or moral he will continue to utilize as certainly as though he remained here. Only physical possessions are lost and these he no longer needs. He has entered upon another stage of the life journey where different work will be done.

We can find a partial analogy for such a situation in the case of a young man in college. He is there preparing for the wider business life of the world, just as all of us are now preparing for the life beyond death, albeit many of us have little plan or purpose about it. That young man in college is popular and useful. Many others look to him for advice and leadership. One day he gets an unexpected summons from his father to close up his college affairs and come home, not to return. All of his associates, who see the matter from their personal viewpoint, exclaim, "What a misfortune! He was the most useful man here." They know nothing of his father's reasons for

breaking off the college life; but of course there was a reason for it. Perhaps the way had suddenly opened for life-long service in some important position where he would be helpful to thousands instead of to dozens. And so it is with those whom we think have died prematurely. Their death is merely an earlier entry upon a wider life than seemed wise from our limited view. The death of a young man on the battlefield may indeed seem like a violent interruption of the life plans, but like all other deaths it is a perfectly natural working out of that particular individual's evolution. From the wider viewpoint of the great cosmic intelligences who superintend human progress it would be seen somewhat as the schoolmaster sees a pupil change from one grade to another grade for different but equally important lessons.

I had the privilege of talking to one of the world's great experts on the subject of life after death, and I asked him what were the first experiences of a soldier killed in battle. He said that it depended upon what the soldier was doing at the moment. If, for example, he was observing artillery fire he might go on for a time without a suspicion that he had suddenly lost his physical body. Of course there would be no physical pain in instant death. But let us suppose that the soldier was operating a machine gun. Then,

explained the investigator, he would know at once that something was wrong. He would probably think that the gun had jammed. As he worked at it he would soon see that his hand passed through the gun! Of course that would give him something of a shock. The ordinary laws of the material world had suddenly changed and he would not know why. At that point our investigator, or some of the other useful people known as "invisible helpers" see the opportunity of giving assistance, and accost the new arrival in the astral world. At first the "dead" soldier will refuse to listen because he is still full of the idea that he is in charge of the gun. When invited to come aside with the helper he will probably curtly reply that he has no time to talk and will express surprise that his visitor does not see that he must hold the enemy back. But when it is pointed out to him that he is not doing anything with the gun, and that he cannot, he is likely to accept the invitation to talk about it. It is certain that it will soon become clear to him that there is nothing else he can do. Then the invisible helper—who is invisible only to people still in physical bodies—explains what has happened and gradually the soldier gets accustomed to the new situation. His sacrifice puts him in a very different position than he would be in if he had died at home in the ordinary way.

Life there, as life here, presents a wide variety of conditions. Here we find that people live in associated groups, the association being determined largely by mental and moral likenesses, and that a certain characteristic environment surrounds them. People here are grouped by mental abilities, by ethical and economic factors, and the environments vary from the slums and jails, up through various gradations to the park-like settings of the mansions and palaces. Precisely so is life varied on the other side of death. The astral world presents a vast gradation of conditions suitable to the varying degrees of mental and moral development in the millions of people who are passing into it and on through it. The man of sincere and earnest purpose, of clean and noble mind, finds his appropriate environment and associates and so, of course, does the violent criminal and the man of coarse type and low morality. Every human being finds there his appropriate place. One's fate beyond this life is largely dependent upon the motives that guide him here. There can be no better security for a happy life beyond than a life of sacrifice here. The man who seeks to avoid a duty because it may lead to personal danger and suffering now, only makes future suffering sure. It is a thousands times better to face even certain disaster in the discharge of duty, for that

leads to peace in the life beyond and to rapid progress in the future. Nobody can suffer anything that is not a necessity in his evolutionary growth, nor escape a pain or a sorrow that is due him. There is no such thing as evading nature. We can't run away from ourselves!

The law of sacrifice is the law of our being and the sooner we know it the better. That fact explains the paradox that he who loses his life shall find it. It is those who live the sacrificial life here that most truly live there—those whose thought is of others rather than of themselves; those who sacrifice personal profit for the common welfare; and, of course, most of all those who give life itself in defense of humanity. A fine example of the spirit of sacrifice occurred in San Francisco in the days just before the conscription law was passed. Volunteers were being accepted and a young Greek went to the Red Cross headquarters and made a donation of his automobile. He added a check that closed his bank account and then laid on top of it the twenty dollars he had in his pocket at the moment. Then he went to the recruiting station and gave himself. I believe that his wisdom was as great as his devotion. Had he fallen at the front he would have died joyously, for one who could take such a course is far enough along in evolution to intuitively know that he was losing the

lesser life to find the greater one. For such a man death can have no terror. It depends absolutely upon the circumstances whether death is horrible or joyous. One may die under the most favorable conditions, surrounded by every security, and yet die miserably. Another may have his physical body torn to pieces with shot or shell and yet die joyously. Halleck brings that truth out vividly in his poem on Bozarris in which he personifies death. He makes Death visit various people—the bride, the mother, the banqueter and the warrior. In one portion of the poem Halleck says:

Come to the bridal chamber, Death;
Come to the mother when she feels
For the first time, her first-born's breath;
Come when the blessed seals that close the pestilence
are broke
And crowded cities wail its stroke;
Come in consumption's ghastly form,
The earthquake's shock, the ocean's storm;
Come when the heart beats high and warm
With banquet song, and dance, and wine—
And thou art terrible! The tear,
The groan, the pall, the knell, the bier,
And all we know, or dream, or fear
Of agony, are thine.
But to the hero, whose sword
Has won the battle for the free,
Thy voice sounds like a prophet's word;
And in its hollow tones are heard
The thanks of millions yet to be!

Posthumous fame is certainly not to be regarded lightly, and the heartfelt thanks of millions has a beneficial emotional effect on the man

who has passed on that it would be difficult to exaggerate. Whether it is by writing poems, or saying prayers, or building monuments, that we express our gratitude to the soldier dead is probably of secondary importance. The important thing is that the gratitude of the people, however it may be expressed, is a boon to the brave men who have died.

One of the vitally important facts about the soldier dead, and all others who have lost the physical body, is that they are now in a state of consciousness in which they are extraordinarily susceptible to the emotions of those who mourn for them. The grief of their friends reacts upon them most unpleasantly. We all know that the distress of another here makes us very uncomfortable. Strong grief always deeply moves others. We cannot see a dear friend in great sorrow and not be moved to the point of distress. Now, those who live in their astral bodies, as all the so-called dead are doing, suffer and enjoy much more intensely than we do. They are much more responsive to emotional vibrations and may suffer keenly through the distress of those who mourn for them. The right attitude toward those who have passed on is one of serenity and good cheer. We should remember that while we are separated from them, they are not separated from us. They are able to visit

us daily. What we are doing, or saying, or even thinking, may not be clearly known to them, but what we *feel*—all that relates to the emotions—they do know, and know in a way that has much to do with brightening or clouding their lives. By remembering that they are not really dead at all but are often with us during the day—albeit most people are not sensitive enough to be aware of it—we can gradually get into a frame of mind that will remove the depression from their lives. Of course it is not easy to control the emotions when death takes those we love, but for their sake a determined effort should be made. All our depression makes them sad; all our cheerfulness gives them joy, and it's only because of our delusions about death that we ever give way to unrestrained grief. This one great truth every bereaved person should have firmly fixed in his mind: *those who have passed on still live.* Riley, the Hoosier poet, has put that thought beautifully and eloquently:

I cannot say, and will not say
That he is dead. He's just away!
With a cheery smile and wave of the hand
He's vanished in an unknown land,
And left us dreaming how fair
It needs must be since he lingers there.
And you—oh, you who the wildest yearn
For the old-time step and the glad return,
Think of him as faring on, as dear
In the love of there, as the love of here;
And loyal still, as when he gave the blows

Of his warrior's strength to his country's foes!
Mild and gentle as he was brave,
When the sweetest love of his life he gave
To little things.
Think of him as the same, I say,
He is not dead, he's just away!

But if they are only away, and not far away at that, why do they not give us some evidence of it? Some of them do, and there is a good reason why others do not. The possibility of a so-called dead man giving his friends evidence of his continued existence depends upon one of two things—either finding someone who can send his message through and connect with his friends here, or the chance that some of his friends may be sensitive enough to be directly impressed by him. When we consider the vast number of people that are daily passing over to the life beyond, and then think of the very small number of sensitives, of all descriptions, we see at once the impossibility of general communication. It would be something like two great cities attempting to transact all business through a dozen telephone booths!

Those who are sensitive are often aware of the presence of their departed friends. Those who are clairaudient hear them, and those who are slightly clairvoyant often see them. But, of course, the majority are not sensitive enough to even feel their presence. In addition to the com-

mon lack of sensitiveness is also the difficulty arising from the remarkable timidity of the average human being about anything connected with the dead, and if one of their friends who has passed on should appear at their side they would be frightened out of their wits! People who are afraid are clearly disqualified for receiving a communication even if they have the necessary sensitiveness.

But why is the intelligence that does succeed in getting through not of a higher order? Why do we not get cures and inventions from that source instead of waiting for doctors and inventors to work them out here? Imagine yourself to have just passed over to the invisible world. When you had found that nearly all the teaching about death was based on misconceptions, when you had realized the glorious fact that there really is no death at all, you would be filled with an intense desire to convey that truth to your sorrowing friends. It would be the one vitally important thing in your mind. You would not in the least be thinking of cures and inventions; and if you did think of them you would not know any more about them than when you lived here. The very fact that the messages sent back are usually of a personal nature is additional evidence of their genuineness. There may be objections to giving too much

attention to communications from the other side of death, but certainly there can be no rational objection to messages of hope and consolation.

In a short discourse it is possible to touch on only a few of the vital points of so vast a subject, but they indicate how helpful Theosophy is in banishing the fear and modifying the grief arising from false beliefs and from uncertainty about the fate of those we have temporarily lost. A fuller study of it will show that in all other directions it is equally helpful. Its study is a scientific search for happiness, with a definite method by which it may be found; and happiness is the most practical thing in the world. It is the object of all human effort. The statesman solving his problems, the miner searching for gold, the mother training her son, the soldier doing his duty, the child selecting its toys, the lover choosing a bride and dreaming of a home that shall be an earthly paradise—in short all the multitudinous activities of the race, are merely the search for happiness, the effort to transmute experience into joy. All the accumulating of money, all the planning for power, all the striving for fame, is but to finally attain happiness. Theosophy sees the same goal but reaches it simply and swiftly by a direct study of nature and a destruction of the delusions about death that afflict us.

There is perhaps no greater need in the world just now than to know that man is immortal; that he does not run his course in one brief life, and that death does not close his career; that life here and hereafter is one continuous whole; that all the friendships made here grow stronger still in the world unseen; that all the countless dead still live and love, and wait to greet once more those they have left behind.

A Scientific Religion

Every religion and philosophy should prove its utility. No test can be too severe for the truth. Truth is like a diamond in the rough. Every stroke of the cutter improves its value. And what is the real test of a religion? It is utility. If it actually instead of theoretically brings joy to life, if it really increases human happiness, if it brings peace and serenity and balance into the daily lives of those who profess it, if it furnishes its devotees with the means, either obvious or occult, of making distinct moral progress between youth and old age that does not fall to the lot of other people through the ordinary processes of natural evolution and, finally, if it bases the belief in immortality not merely upon the intuitive feeling known as faith, but also upon sound scientific ground, then it is of real value to the human race. If it fails to do these things, or any one of them, it either falls short of human requirements or it is not understood aright. If it does accomplish all these things it may properly be called a scientific religion.

We live in the age of the "reason why." Our demand is to know, not to believe. The age of the vague has passed. The era of the definite is here. The old style of faith has gone out of fashion forever. But it satisfied our fathers; and it had its conveniences. It is easier to accept than to investigate. But the growth of intellect in the race as a whole has wrought a racial change and we can no more go back to the old style of faith than we can return to primitive methods in commercial life.

The old faith was free from the influence of reason. It was built up in the day of direct teaching by divine instructors. When the instructors vanished, succeeding generations clung to the traditions and finally to a printed form of the traditions. As century after century passed the relation between the meaning and the form became fainter and fainter until, in most cases, only the empty form remained. The story of the Garden of Eden, once vital with the truths of human evolution, became a foolish tale because the true meaning was lost; and a similar fate was the lot of other beautiful and instructive allegories of the Bible. The old-fashioned faith was the faith that clung to these empty and meaningless forms and held it to be blasphemous to doubt. It was the faith that was without reason and was blind to the ludicrous.

A scoffing wit once put it concisely by declaring that a certain type of mind could not only believe that the whale swallowed Jonah but appeared to regret that the story had not been that Jonah swallowed the whale, so they could prove their wealth of faith by believing that also!

The new faith belongs to the age of thought and came with the quickening of the intellectual side of human nature. It came with the Renaissance, grew with all the vicissitudes that transformed decaying feudalism into modern civilization, and will reach its highest point when the outer facts of physical science and the inner truths of occult science are united as the complete science that makes faith and knowledge one.

We may put it in what way we will, but the simple truth is that there can be no real faith without knowledge. Intuition itself is only a form of knowledge, a perception of the verities of nature, and knowledge none the less because it comes from beyond the limited realm of the waking consciousness and is independent of the physical senses. Such intuition or instinctive feeling is as certainly based on experience as the belief that we shall sooner or later die. The new faith is based on a double knowledge of the inner and the outer, the occult truth corroborated by the physical facts.

The crowning glory of any religion is its promise of immortality. We live, and our master desire is to continue to live. So insatiable is the thirst for life that we cling to it through pain and poverty—through all the failures that bring misery and despair; for all the multiplied woes of physical existence are outweighed by its joys and there is no danger we would not face, no ordeal we would not endure, to win immortal life with those we love. But the hope of immortality is only a worthless dream unless it rests upon a foundation as solid as any that science can build. Only when we comprehend that we shall live after physical death, as certainly as we know that the body must die, can a rational belief in immortality be said to be established. The religion that can bring us that assurance may surely be called a scientific religion.

Looking upon the religious teachings of our day as they come from the religious press and pulpit and as practiced in the daily lives of the millions, do they meet this requirement? Is the popular religious conception a living, vital force in the life of its adherents that distinguishes them from the people of the world—from the other millions who give no attention to such matters? Does it give the perfect confidence about a future life that brings serene joy into this one or is the fear of death and the dread

of separation as great as with those who profess no faith at all? Does it enable the living to look untroubled upon the face of the dead, without doubt or fear about the future? If a man's religion does not do that for him there is something wrong with it or wrong with his comprehension of it.

One of the striking characteristics of the religious teachings of the times is the absence of any definite knowledge about a future life or any effort to place a belief in it upon any firmer ground than what is loosely called "faith"—by which is usually meant the ability to accept a teaching that is given with authority whether or not the reason approves it. Upon this all-important subject of a future life those who teach from our pulpits are, as a rule, absolutely silent except as to the general assertion that there *is* such a life. To this declaration the majority of the expounders add that in that future life a part of the people will be happy and a part eternally miserable; while a very small minority of the teachers hold that all will be "saved." But of definite teaching of what that life is like there is none. None of these teachers comes forward, like the seers of old, with a declaration about what is personally known to them of the life beyond, or like St. John, gives us a description of what he has seen and experienced. Instead

they give us only descriptions by those who lived many centuries ago and whose utterances may have been written down long after they were spoken. About their meaning there is now great difference of opinion. This has led to almost innumerable sects and denominations, disagreeing so widely about what the Scriptures mean that one is positive that all will be "saved," while another is equally certain that the majority will be "lost." Between these extremes are countless other opinions, a thousand ideas about just what is necessary to insure immortality for anybody, and all of these ideas are related much more closely to what one believes than with anything that he must do; for however greatly opinions may differ on these subjects those who hold them live their lives substantially alike.

There are at least four things that a religion must do to be most truly useful to the human race. It must deal satisfactorily with the problem of the origin and destiny of humanity. It must make clear and reasonable the fact of immortality. It must furnish definite means of moral development and spiritual illumination. It must present a code of ethics that rests upon absolute justice between God and man, and between man and man, that gives a strong feeling of responsibility for personal conduct in daily

life. Theosophy does all this and much more.

Theosophy is a philosophy rather than a religion but it nevertheless serves the same ends as a religion and it is, of all things, scientific. It deals with man as man deals with any object in science—traces his origin, analyzes his being and searches out his destiny. In doing this it places beneath the hope of immortality an imperishable foundation of verifiable truth. What facts, then, does this scientific religion set forth and verify? First, that every human being has a wider, higher, greater consciousness than that of his physical life. The evidence to support this assertion, that the human consciousness is something more than we know it for in this physical life, is both abundant and convincing.

The average person, whether he believes that death means annihilation or believes that he will exist in some fashion after losing his physical body, regards a man as being pretty much what he appears to the physical senses to be. To him either death ends all or he continues to exist in a heaven in which he uses the same senses in about the same way and for the same purposes as in physical life. That he will enjoy a wider consciousness and live a life as different from the physical as an animal's life is different from the human, does not enter into his thought; and the assertion that he now has that greater con-

sciousness but does not, and ordinarily cannot, know it in his waking physical life because of the limitations of physical matter, would appear to him to be the merest nonsense; and yet that the physical man with his physical senses is not the real man is a fact that psychological research is making clearer every day. There is no longer any escape from the insistent truth that the waking consciousness is but a part of our consciousness and that the physical life is a fragment of our whole life.

The evidence that this is so comes along so many lines of manifestation that some of its phases of expression are likely to be familiar to all readers. One of these is clairvoyance, and here the evidence is of a most practical sort. For example, a peasant boy in Norway acquires world-wide fame by finding dead bodies of people who had mysteriously disappeared and by assisting the police to solve the problem of a puzzling robbery by naming as the thief one who was not even suspected but who, suddenly confronted by the boy's accusation, confessed and restored the plunder.

In premonitions we have phenomena of another kind but equally of the nature of hard-headed, practical evidence—the sort that appeals to the man who wants something that can be called proof. Here we have evidence of a pre-

science of which we know nothing whatever in this life of the physical world and which we are utterly unable to explain unless the human being is very much more than he appears to be. In clairvoyance we have evidence of the existence of a faculty or power that can obtain ordinary information, like the location of a dead body far beneath the ice and water, in a way wholly impossible to any physical sense and absolutely mysterious if considered from the viewpoint of physical life; but in premonitions we have the exercise of what is apparently a still higher faculty; for it not only gives information about things which, as yet, *are not*, so far as physical life is concerned, but which *are to be*. Thus a man foretells his own death, or the death of another, or the burning of a house, or the sinking of a ship on the morrow, when the ship has not yet sailed. Such premonitions often come as dreams and upon awaking the dreamer feels as one who has had a momentary glimpse of the real life. So vital is his impression that no physical world reasoning can shake him out of its utter certainty although it may be a gloomy tragedy in which he is to be the chief actor.

Premonitions are not always related to important events in the life of those who have

these glimpses of the future that is to be. Often they are concerned with trivial matters. One will have a premonition of meeting with an old friend from whom he has been separated for years while another merely catches a glimpse of a landscape he has never before seen but which he soon encounters and readily recognizes. Even things of lesser importance may be the subject. And this is precisely what reason would lead us to expect if, as the Theosophist asserts, the so-called "dream" is in truth but an incomplete recollection of a verity of the wider life, brought with more or less uncertainty into the physical consciousness. If that is so it would naturally depend less upon how important the fact was than upon the conditions essential to the transfer of memory from the wider to the narrower consciousness; and such necessary conditions would not exist only for important, and never for trivial events, but impartially for both.

In experimental hypnotism we have further evidence of the truth of the declaration that the human being is, in this physical life, manifesting but a fragment of his complete consciousness. A case in point is the experiment of throwing a person of very ordinary intelligence and no education into a hypnotic

trance—in other words practically freeing him from the limitations of the physical brain and body. He then has the power of looking within his own body and not only accurately describing some obstruction the doctors are unable to reach but, although wholly ignorant of medical practice or surgical science, of actually describing in detail the future course of an incipient disease. Turning his attention in another direction he is able with equal facility to get information about what is occurring on the opposite side of the earth, the accuracy of his description being afterwards verified by the ordinary methods of obtaining such facts. In various other directions his achievements are equally astonishing and are absolutely without explanation if we regard the physical consciousness as the complete consciousness. But if we accept, as a hypothesis for investigation, the theosophical explanation of such phenomena, then not only these remarkable superphysical faculties but also premonitions and all the puzzling problems presented by dreams, including the dream that accurately forecasts the future, become comprehensible; for it is then seen that the physical brain instead of being the producer of consciousness is, in reality, the limitation of con-

sciousness, shutting out from ordinary physical life that portion of the whole life that is too ethereal to fall ordinarily within the grasp of the sense organs. This superphysical consciousness is unknown to the so-called waking consciousness just because it *is* superphysical; and only in rare moments of tranquility or when the inner conditions present precisely the right combination of harmonious relationships is it possible to bring even a fragment of that wider and mightier consciousness into the lesser.

A study of even a few of the innumerable cases presented in the phenomena of clairvoyance, dreams, premonitions, hypnotic trance, etc., will give most interesting and instructive evidence of the working of this wider consciousness which is unknown to the daily life of the physical world.

The second great truth put forward in this connection by this scientific religion, that would prove what it teaches, is that the human being survives bodily death and continues his existence, not in some remote heaven filled with winged angels or some hell of eternal horrors, but in what may rightly be called an intermediate earth-region consisting of matter so rare that it is unknown to any physical sense—so impalpable that

although bodies in which the consciousness then functions are as certainly bodies, with form, as those composed of physical matter, they nevertheless freely pass through the so-called solid matter of the physical region somewhat as the mass of matter we call air fills a room or moves through every garment we wear without any one of our physical senses being aware of it. We can prove the presence of the unseen air by experiment and by the process of reasoning, and in the same way the fact of superphysical existence can be established.

Of strictly scientific experiments to determine whether we survive bodily death, the most notable are those of Sir William Crookes and, having been published in detail in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, they are too well known to be repeated here.

While the work of scientists furnishes the scientific basis for the belief that the human consciousness is in nowise dependent upon the physical body for existence, there are also innumerable instances in which personal experience corroborates and confirms the facts given us by the scientific men. The literature of the subject is full of cases attested by witnesses of unquestioned probity, that clearly indicate the truth of the theo-

sophical teaching of the nearness of the so-called dead to the living and of occasional interference in the affairs of the living.

In the literature devoted to the subject, are many stories of warnings which save life such as, for example, a person being awakened by the familiar voice of a friend, or relative, in a warning to leave a building which collapsed almost immediately afterward.

The skeptical investigator may be prompted to inquire why it is, if such a rescue is really at the hands of those who have passed into the invisible realms, that anybody is ever permitted to meet death through accident. But if we keep in mind the theosophical teaching that the loss of the physical body gives neither greater wisdom nor unlimited power, but only entrance into a life of wider consciousness and greater opportunity, and if in addition we remember that natural law governs all the realms as certainly as it does this one of the physical senses, it will be seen that there as well as here, people are unable to shape affairs to please them. Here in the physical life we can and do occasionally change the course of events seen to be culminating in what we call an accident; we seldom do it. Either we do not know in time

or knowing, we have not the power to prevent the disaster. The causes which produce the event have passed the point where our limited powers can either neutralize them or modify them. We may see a frightened horse dashing down a crowded street but not have both the opportunity and the power to stop it. We may see an incipient fire in a house at just the opportune moment to extinguish it and save many lives; or we may be five minutes too late so that our knowledge of the danger to others would be useless. Where one such rescue actually occurs, many houses burn and many lives are lost. To what extent we could assist others in such a case, indeed in any case, would depend entirely upon the circumstances. We might be able to get all of them safely out, or we might be able to do absolutely nothing but look helplessly on. It would depend upon many things —upon our own strength, courage and coolness; upon what kind of people we were trying to rescue; upon the character and condition of the building; upon the element of time, the state of the weather, and a number of other things that are always factors in such a problem. And so it must be with those who have passed from the physical body but still play a part in our affairs. They

must necessarily have their limitations just as we have, although naturally enough in some directions in a different way. It is easy to understand how one of these limitations is *the lack of sensitiveness* on the part of those living in a physical body—a thing that might be likened to the deafness of a man about to be run down by a frightened horse. You may see his danger in good time and yet shout your warning in vain.

If the investigator excludes all theosophical literature, as well as the voluminous literature of spiritualism, he will still find that the works of impartial scientific men furnish a mass of evidence of the same character. But whether explained or not, facts are facts and the genuineness of such phenomena is no longer questioned by really progressive scientists. Many of them are doubtfully groping for a working hypothesis while others are content to merely add to the great mass of phenomena already observed and verified again and again. Meantime Theosophy is patiently waiting with its hypothesis that clearly and reasonably explains the origin and nature of man, his constitutional independence of the physical body and the method of his evolution—the hypothesis that can explain every fact that the investigators have brought forth—that makes the perplex-

ing facts reasonable and makes the hope of immortality strong and confident, for it is the hypothesis of a scientific religion.

It is by no means only in the direction of the investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man that Theosophy may be called scientific. That term may appropriately be applied to the whole of the theosophical presentation of the origin, the evolution and the destiny of the race. And these theosophical conceptions are always found to be of the greatest utility when practically applied to the life of the world.

There is neither vagueness nor incompleteness in the theosophical teachings, but always scientific precision and presentation of a comprehensive scheme of human evolution. In the great truths of the immanence of God, the law of cause and effect, and of reincarnation, is presented a natural, logical, coherent outline of the origin and evolution of humanity that satisfies both metaphysical and scientific demands. While it promises the investigator, as the reward of serious and persistent effort, personal knowledge that his consciousness is independent of his physical body—a personal knowledge that many of its students can truly claim—it also furnishes evidence of the survival of bodily

death along the various lines mentioned in preceding pages that must have great weight with the unprejudiced inquirer. It throws a flood of light upon all the perplexing problems of physical existence that have not only baffled, but also dismayed, millions of earnest and thoughtful people—a light that does more than merely solve the riddles of life, for it has the magic power to dispel even the gloom of death; and in the midst of the most vigorous life few people are perfectly free from the fear of death. Death is the skeleton at the feast of life—the silent specter that fills the mind with fear. Across every threshold and upon almost every heart falls this fearsome shadow. Any philosophy that removes this dread, that dispels this cloud and lights the tomb with reason's torch, deserves the thanks and gratitude of all. No greater boon can come to man than a knowledge of nature that shall rob death of its terror and drive this fiend of fear from the mind of man.

We never do fear what we really understand and a knowledge of the invisible world about us, of the hidden side of nature, of the soul and its vestures, of the facts about death and the wider life to which it is but the doorway, will banish all doubt and fill life with confidence and joy.

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